バカとテストと召喚獣 7

井上堅二
Kenji Inoue

ファミ通文庫

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Famitsu Bunko

これまで数々の恥辱（ちじょく）（←自業自得）に耐えてきた明久（あきひさ）とFクラスの面々。しかし、そんな彼らも遂に爆発!? 新学期早々の抜き打ち持ち物検査で聖典（エロ本）を没収され復讐に燃える修羅（バカ）たちは、体育祭の一競技、生徒vs教師交流野球で教師陣に直接恨みを晴らさんと誓うのだが……。なんと競技は戦友（エロ本）を賭けた召喚獣野球に発展！ パトス溢れる球宴の果てに明久たちを待つのは勝利か敗北か？「このままだったらお前も死ぬぞ！」（by獲物（えもの）先輩）熱闘激闘剛速球で贈る第7巻！

Novel Illustrations

井上堅二

Kenji Inoue

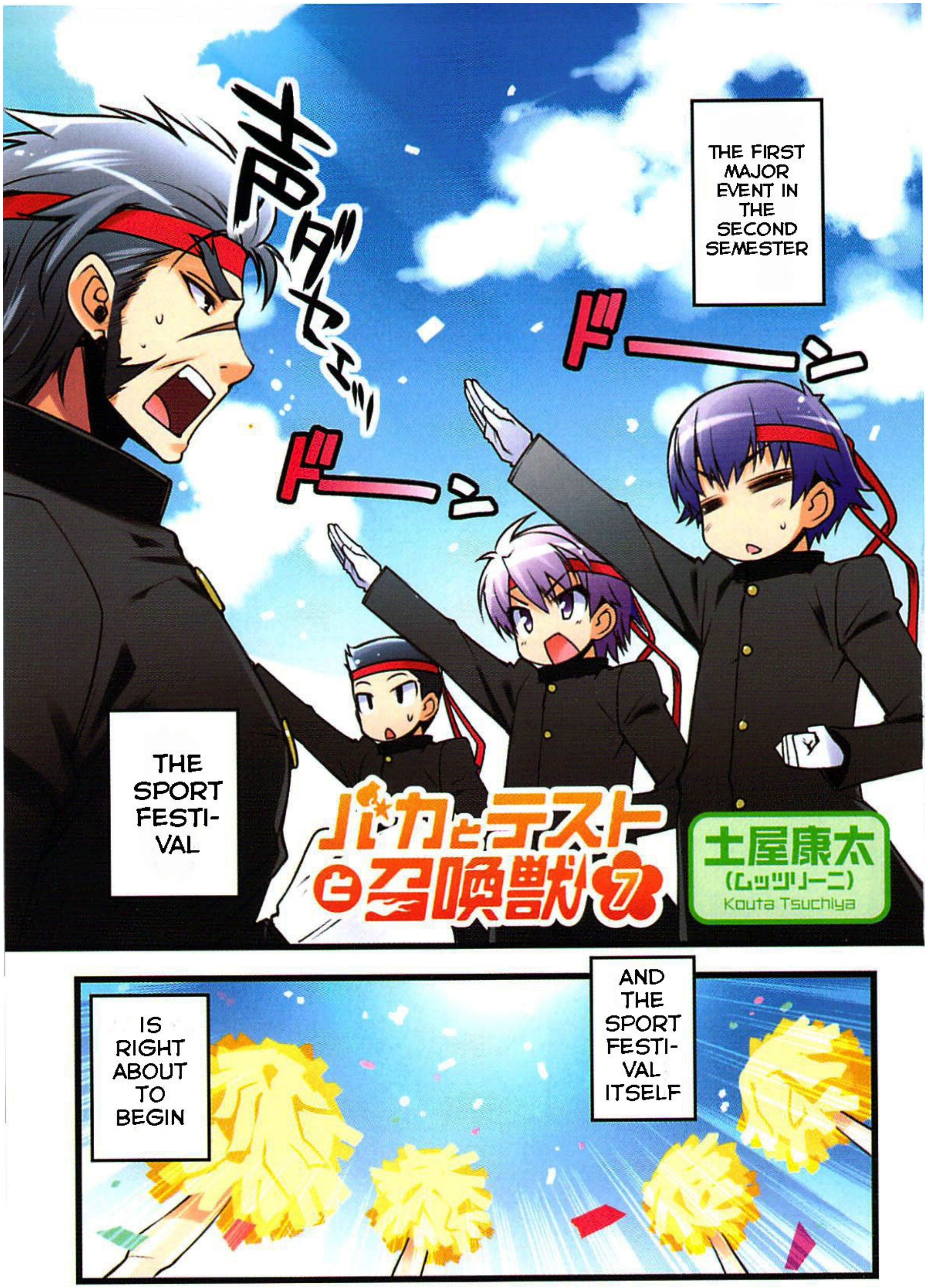
ついに表紙は一周して再び瑞希に。一巻とは違って夏服仕様なので、彼女の特徴がこれでもかというくらいに……。こうなると、いずれ来るであろう美波の夏服が可哀想な気がします。散々弄っておいて今更ですが。それはそうと、表紙のキャラが一周する前にまだ出てきていないキャラがいるような気が――ああ、わかりました。さては短編用に取っておいてあるんですね？

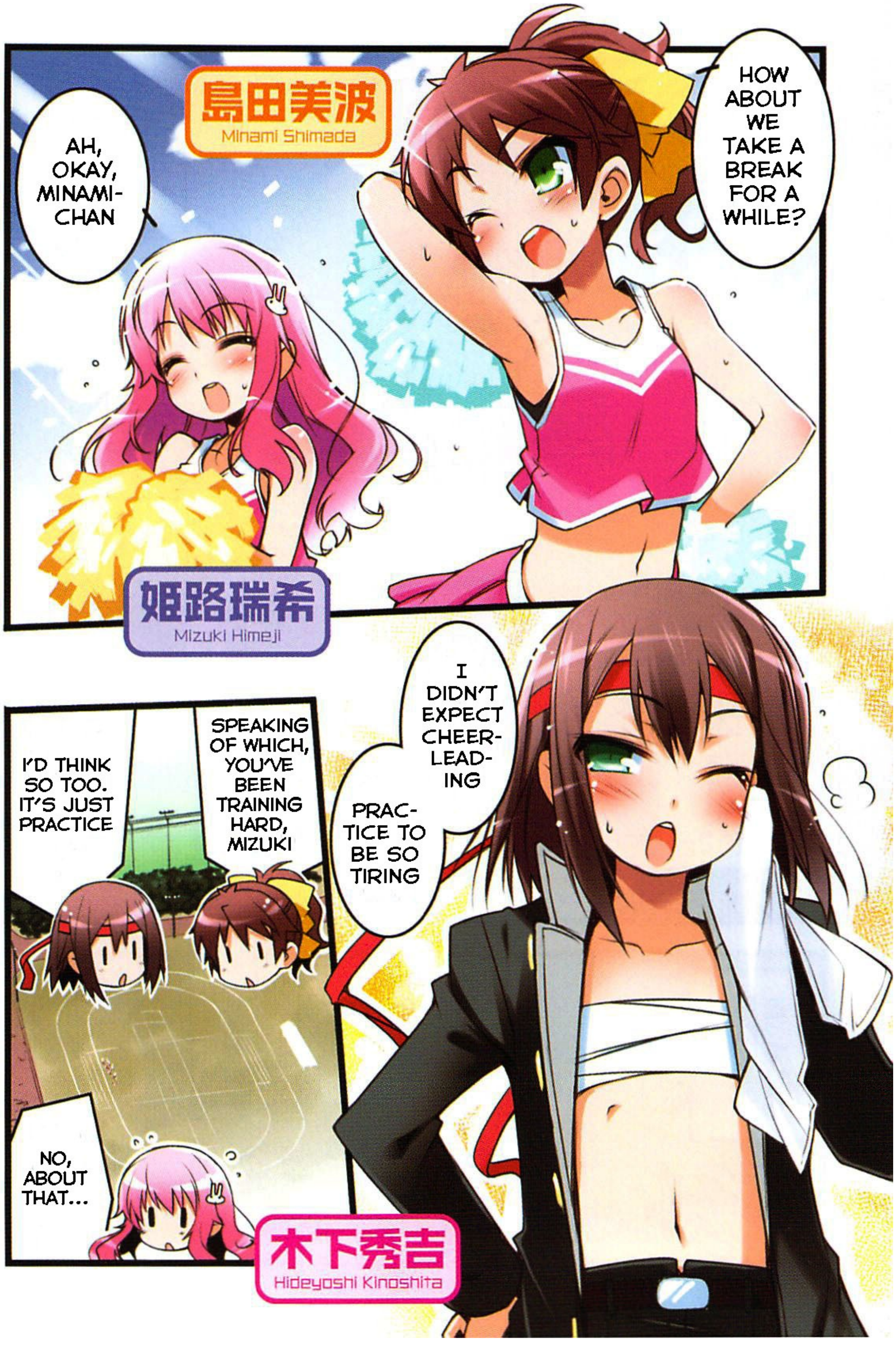
葉賀ユイ

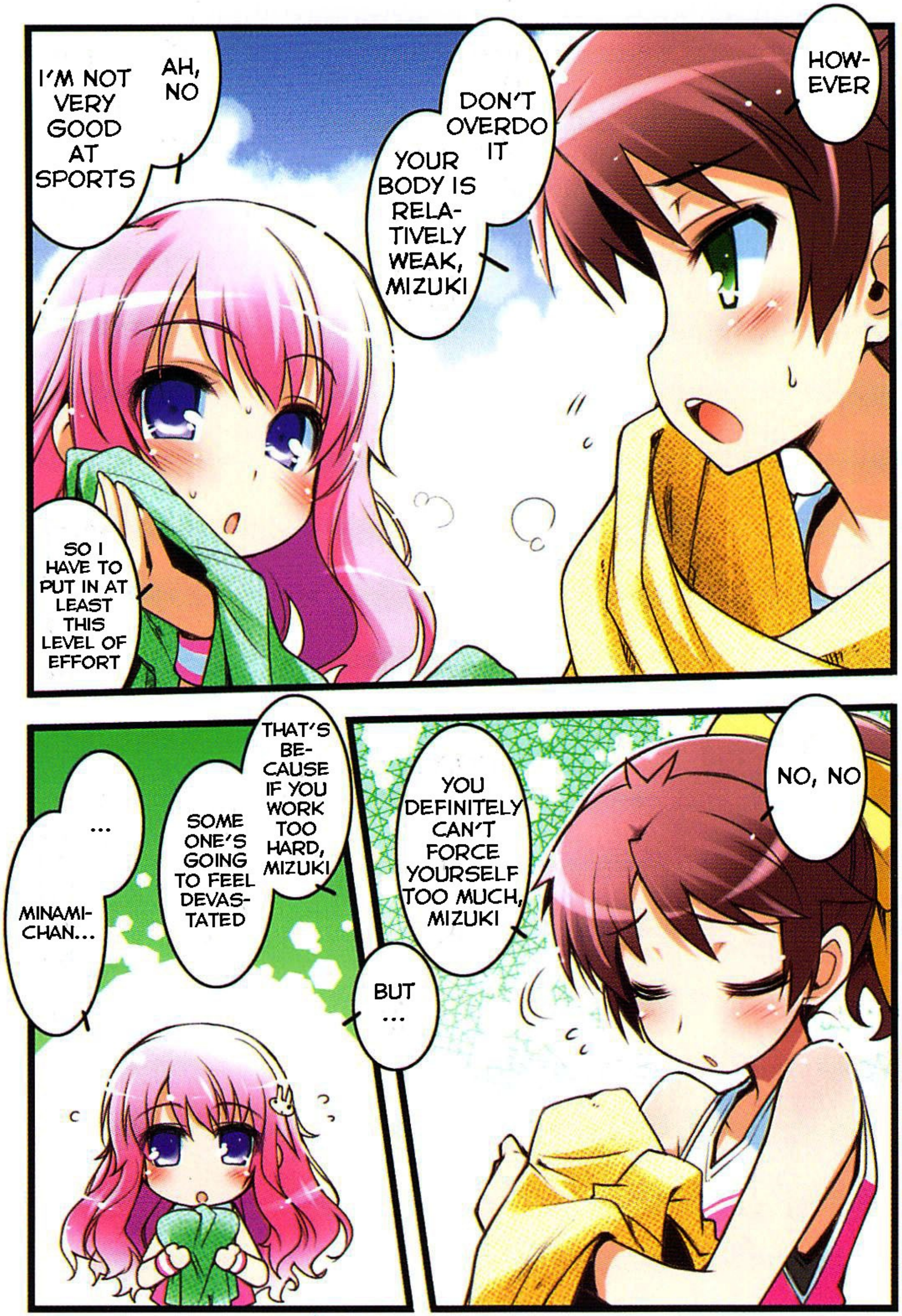
Yui Haga

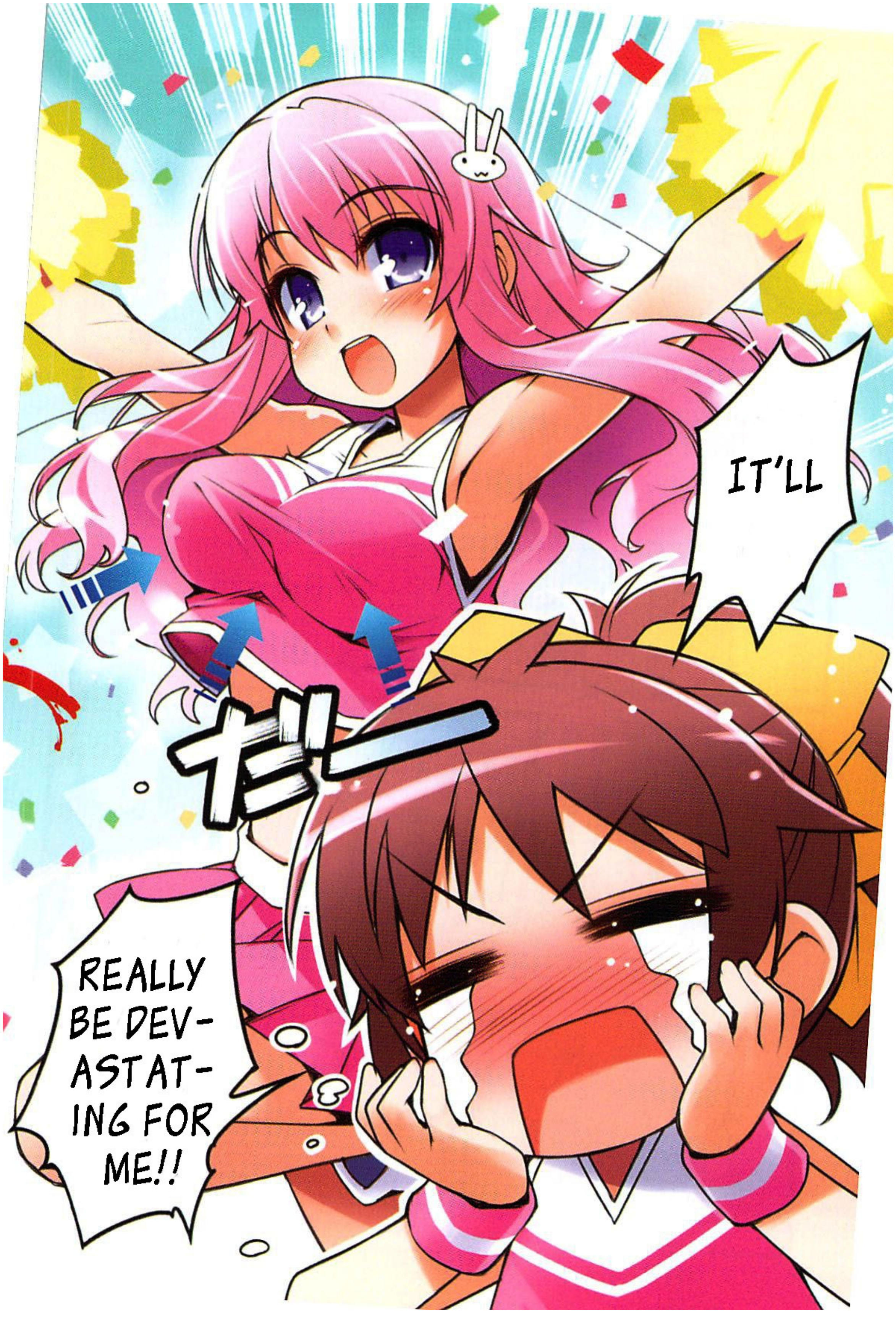
近場に博多ラーメンの店ができることを夢見る妄想系絵描き。インドカレー屋ばかり7店もあったって困ります。体育祭といえば、学生生活を通して、とうとう「パン食い競争」なる代物に遭遇することが叶いませんでした。あれは都市伝説なのでは……!?

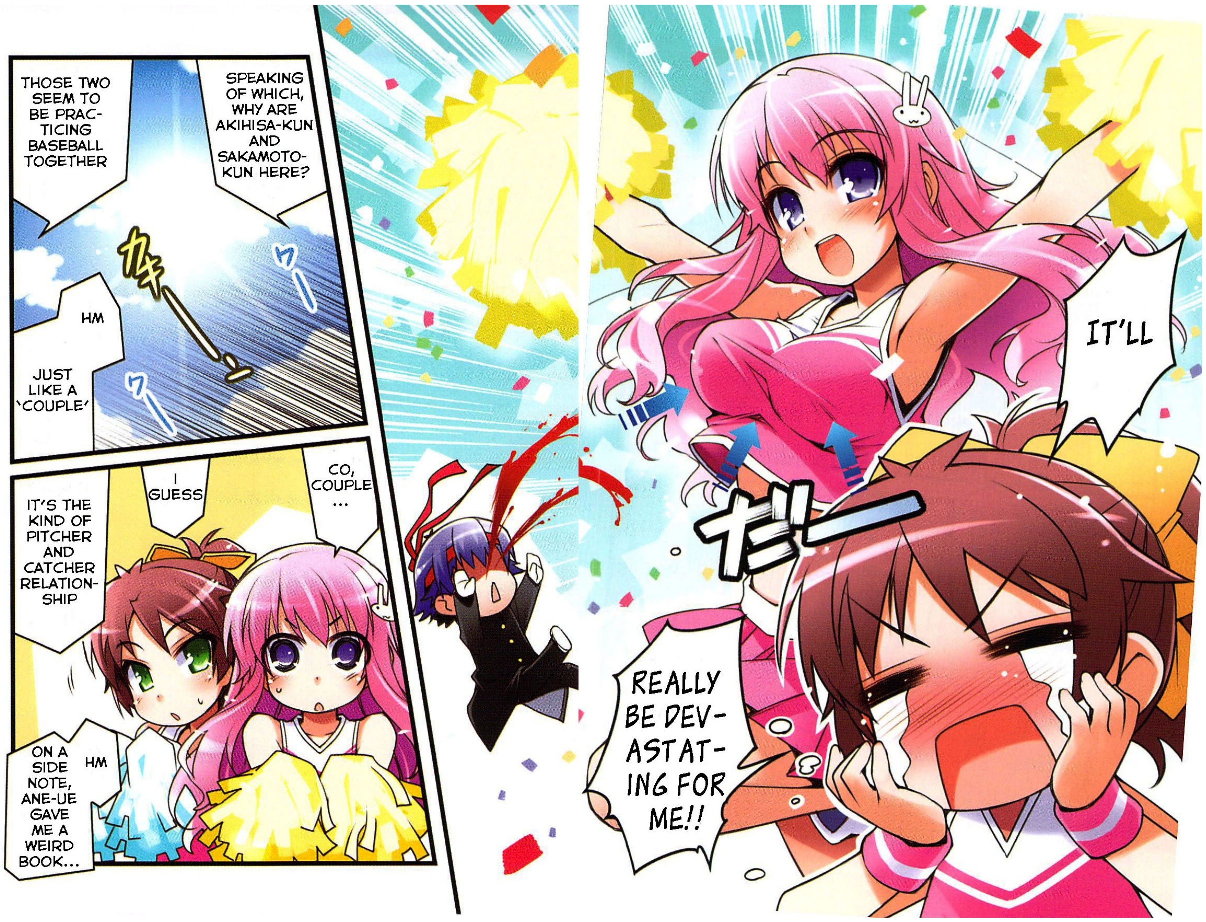
カバーイラスト　葉賀ユイ

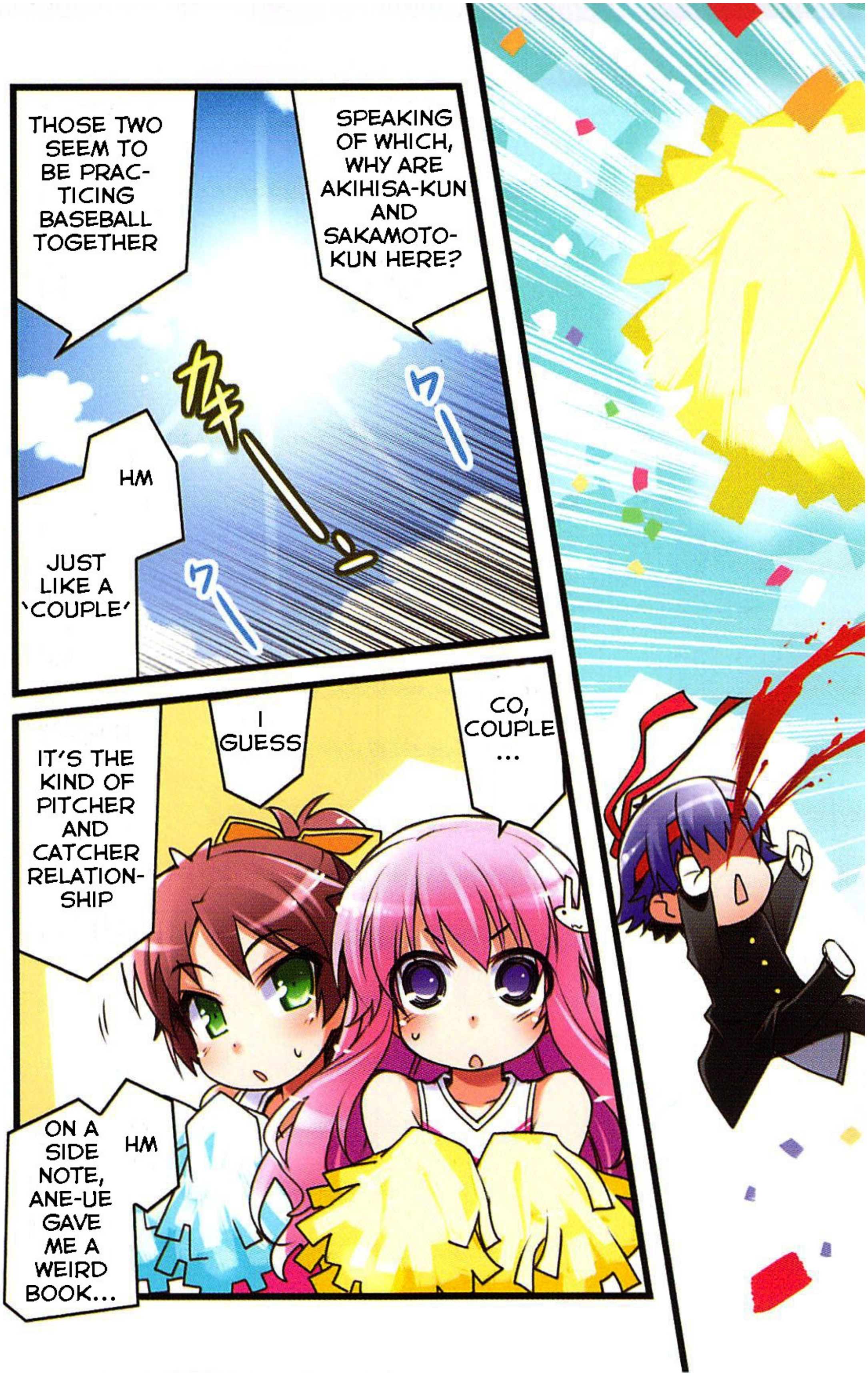

THE FIRST MAJOR EVENT IN THE SECOND SEMESTER
声ダセェッ
ドーーン
ドーン
THE SPORT FESTIVAL
バカとテストと召喚獣 7
土屋康太
(ムッツリーニ)
Kouta Tsuchiya
AND THE SPORT FESTIVAL ITSELF
IS RIGHT ABOUT TO BEGIN


島田美波
Minami Shimada
HOW ABOUT WE TAKE A BREAK FOR A WHILE?
AH, OKAY, MINAMI-CHAN
姫路瑞希
Mizuki Himeji
I DIDN'T EXPECT CHEERLEADING
PRACTICE TO BE SO TIRING
SPEAKING OF WHICH, YOU'VE BEEN TRAINING HARD, MIZUKI
I'D THINK SO TOO. IT'S JUST PRACTICE
NO, ABOUT THAT...
木下秀吉
Hideyoshi Kinoshita


HOWEVER
DON'T OVERDO IT
YOUR BODY IS RELATIVELY WEAK, MIZUKI
AH, NO
I'M NOT VERY GOOD AT SPORTS
SO I HAVE TO PUT IN AT LEAST THIS LEVEL OF EFFORT
NO, NO
YOU DEFINITELY CAN'T FORCE YOURSELF TOO MUCH, MIZUKI
BUT ...
THAT'S BECAUSE IF YOU WORK TOO HARD, MIZUKI
SOME ONE'S GOING TO FEEL DEVASTATED
...
MINAMI-CHAN...


IT'LL
ズー
REALLY BE DEVASTATING FOR ME!!


SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHY ARE AKIHISA-KUN AND SAKAMOTO-KUN HERE?
THOSE TWO SEEM TO BE PRACTICING BASEBALL TOGETHER
カキ
ワー
ワー
HM
JUST LIKE A 'COUPLE'
CO, COUPLE...
I GUESS
IT'S THE KIND OF PITCHER AND CATCHER RELATIONSHIP
HM
ON A SIDE NOTE, ANE-UE GAVE ME A WEIRD BOOK...
IT'LL
だー
REALLY BE DEVASTATING FOR ME!!


SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHY ARE AKIHISA-KUN AND SAKAMOTO-KUN HERE?
THOSE TWO SEEM TO BE PRACTICING BASEBALL TOGETHER
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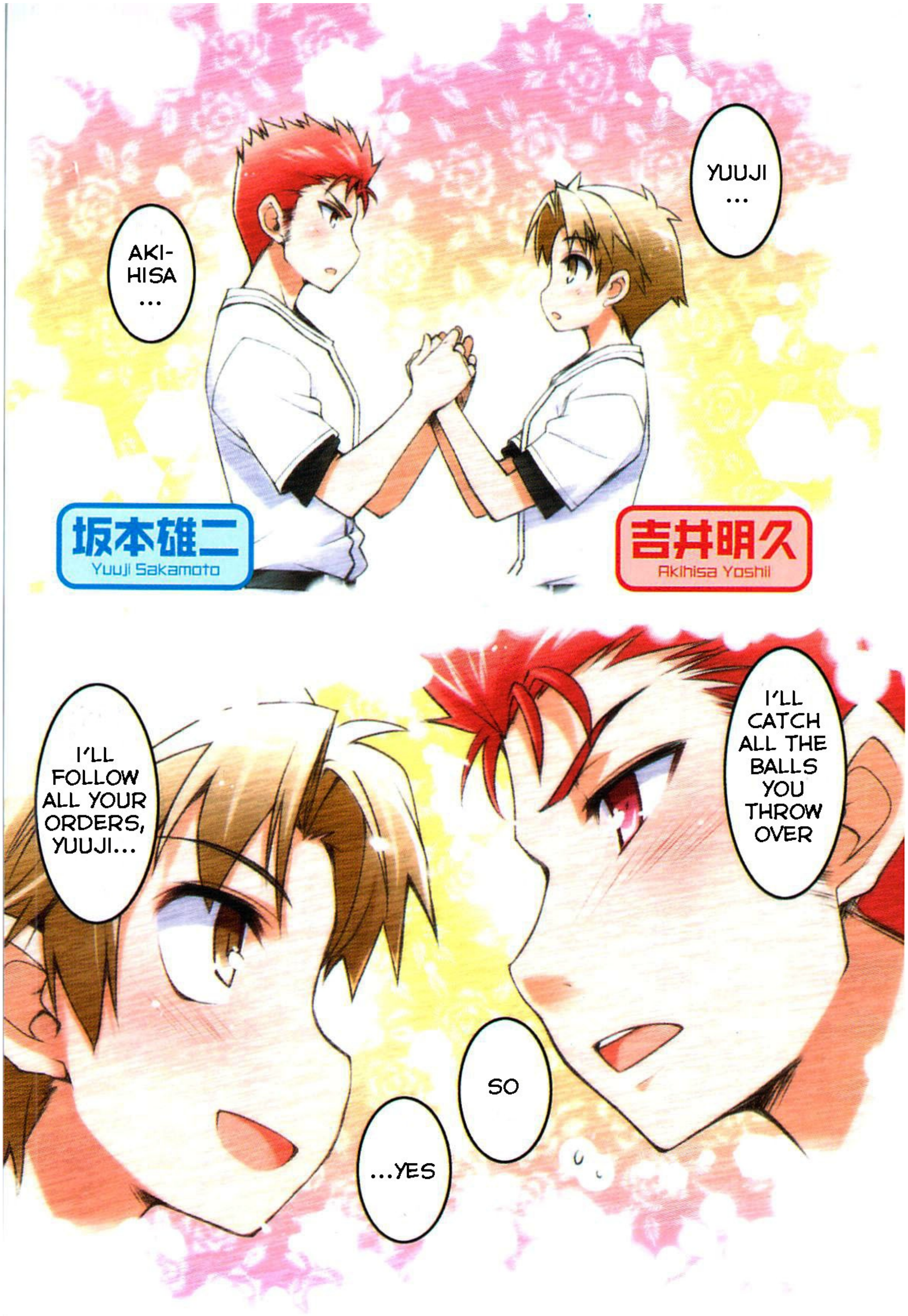
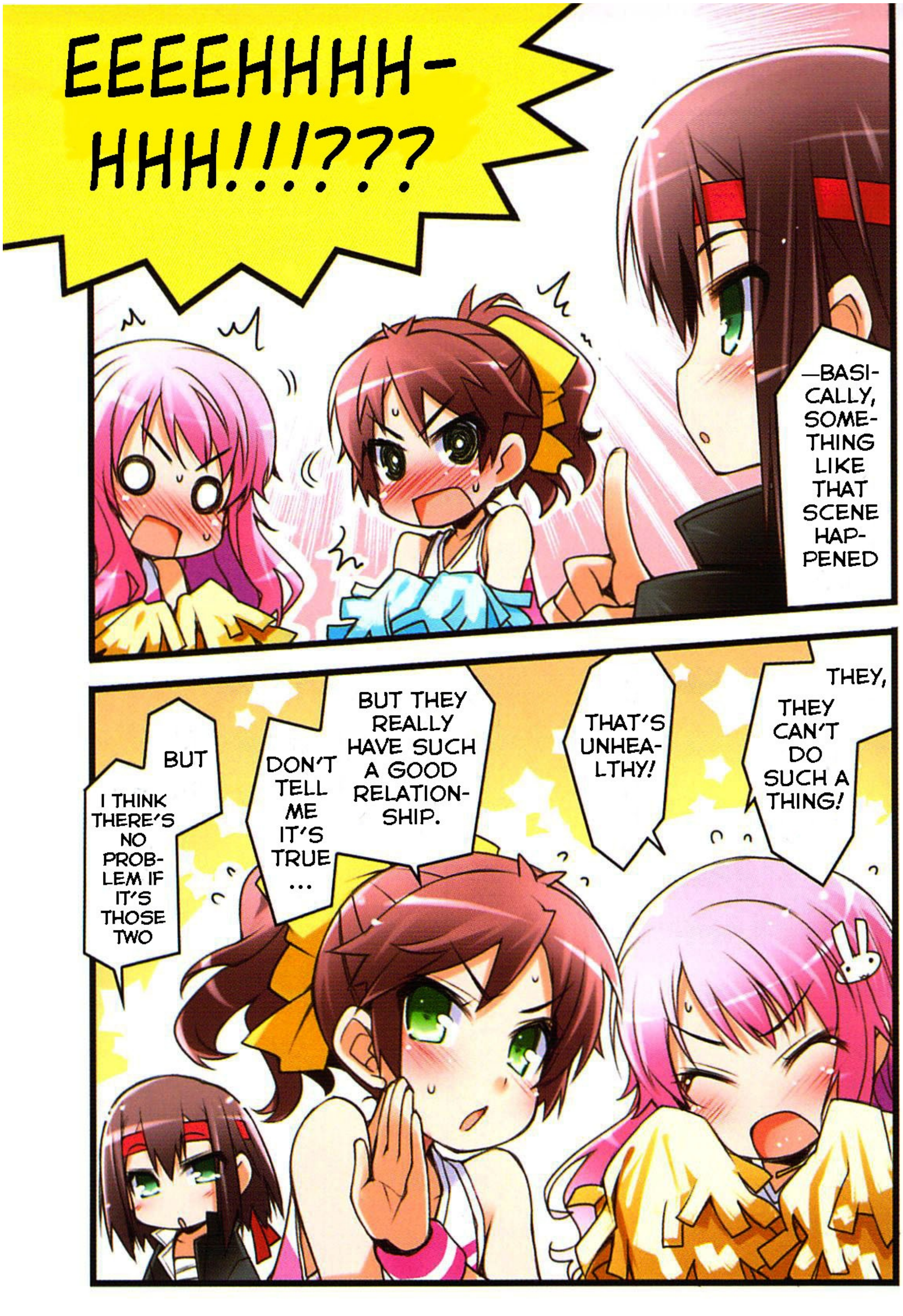
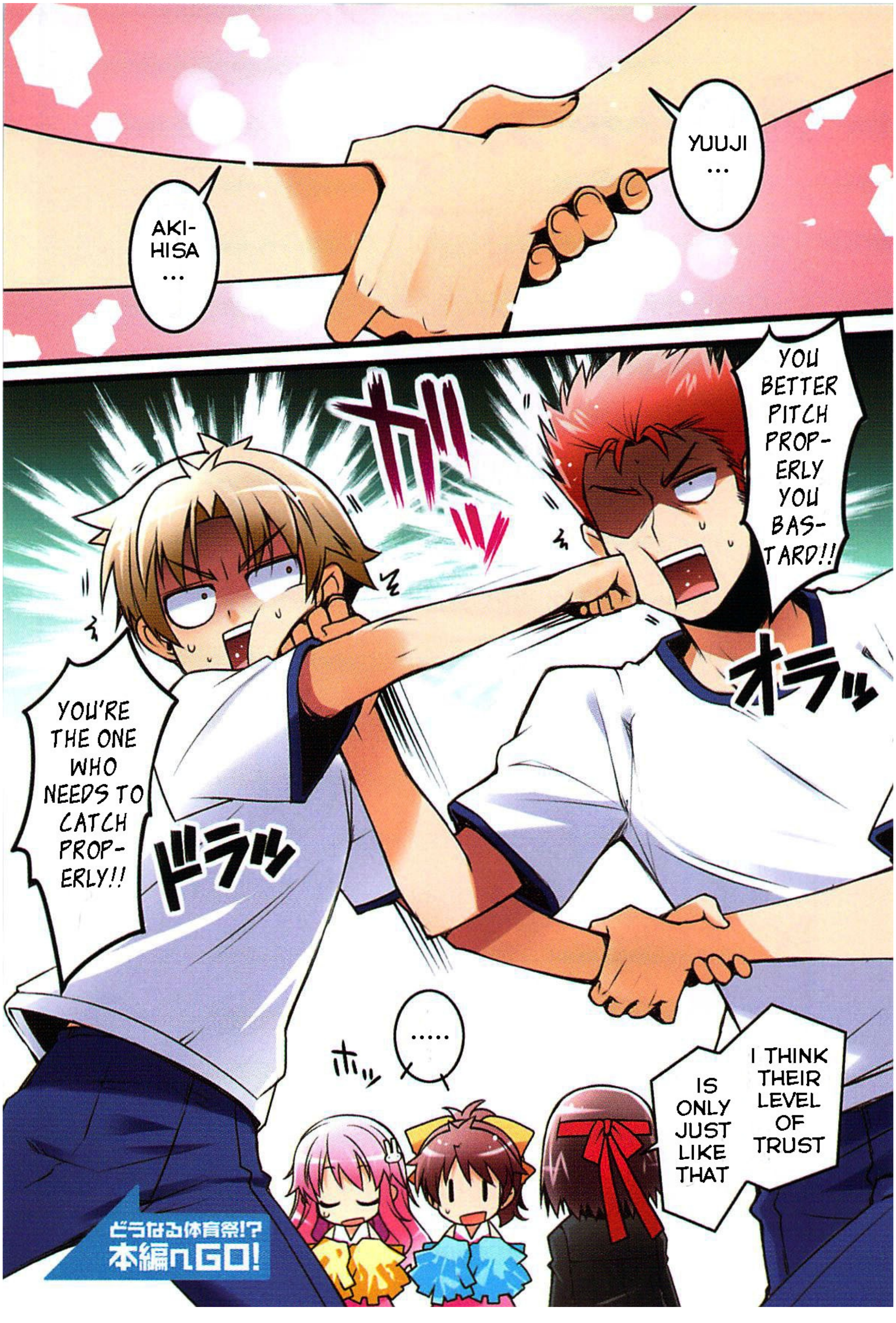
ワー
HM
JUST LIKE A 'COUPLE'
CO, COUPLE …
I GUESS
IT'S THE KIND OF PITCHER AND CATCHER RELATIONSHIP
HM
ON A SIDE NOTE, ANE-UE GAVE ME A WEIRD BOOK…


YUUJI …
AKI-HISA …
吉井明久 Akihisa Yoshii
坂本雄二 Yuuji Sakamoto
I'LL CATCH ALL THE BALLS YOU THROW OVER
I'LL FOLLOW ALL YOUR ORDERS, YUUJI…
SO
…YES


—BASICALLY, SOMETHING LIKE THAT SCENE HAPPENED
EEEEHHHHHHH!!!???
THEY, THEY CAN'T DO SUCH A THING!
THAT'S UNHEALTHY!
BUT THEY REALLY HAVE SUCH A GOOD RELATIONSHIP.
DON'T TELL ME IT'S TRUE…
BUT
I THINK THERE'S NO PROBLEM IF IT'S THOSE TWO


YUUJI …
AKI-HISA …
ガッ
YOU BETTER PITCH PROPERLY YOU BASTARD!!
オラッ
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO NEEDS TO CATCH PROPERLY!!
ドラッ
I THINK THEIR LEVEL OF TRUST
IS ONLY JUST LIKE THAT
……
ホッ
どうなる体育祭!?
本編へGO!

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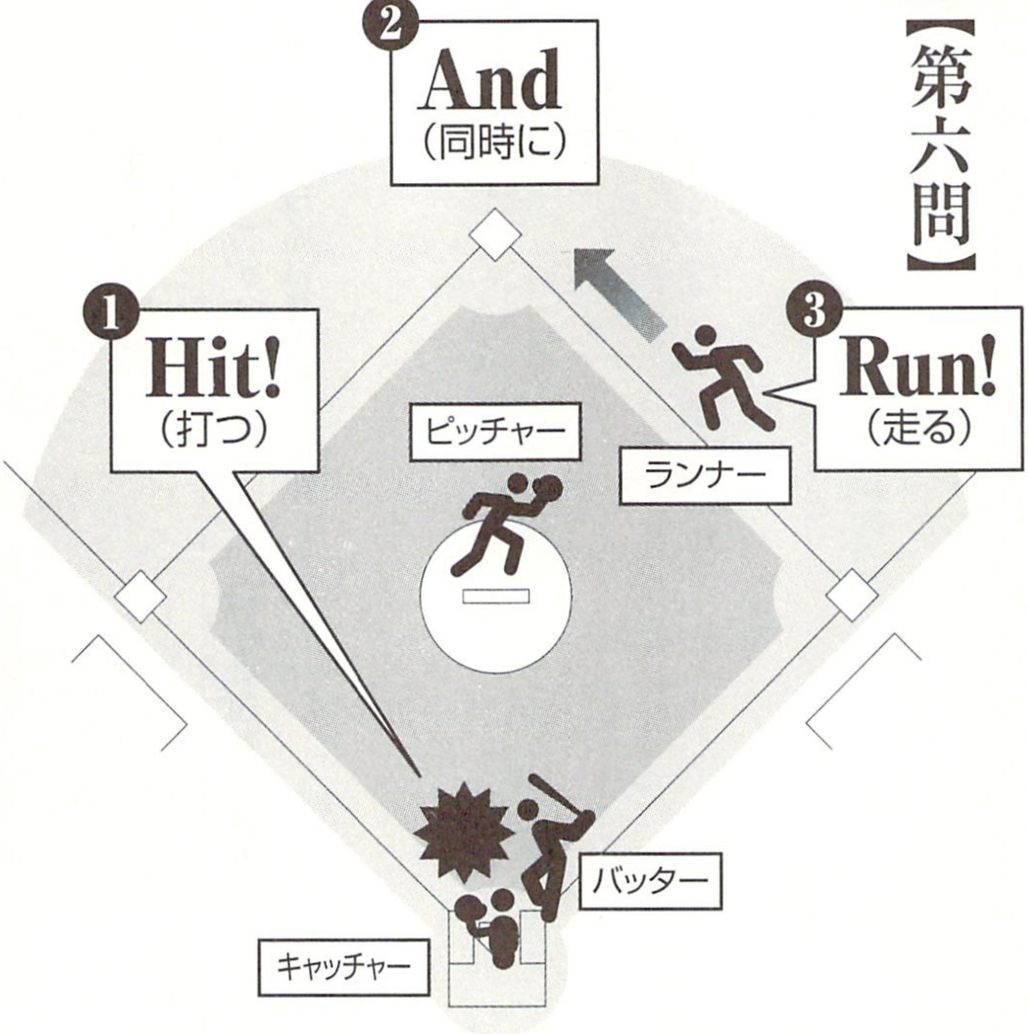
あとがき　340

【第六問】

ヒットエンドランとは、どのような連携でしょうか？

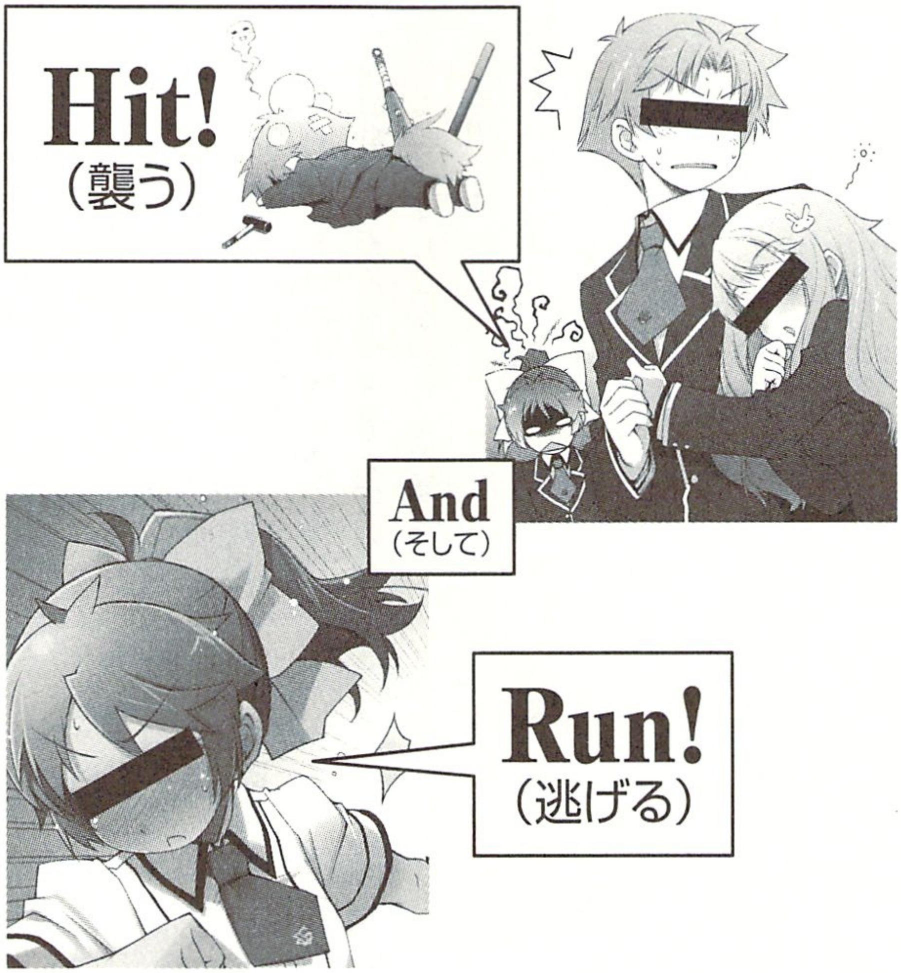
……………………………………………………

《吉井明久の知っているヒットエンドラン》



❷ And （同時に）
❶ Hit! （打つ）
❸ Run! （走る）
ピッチャー
ランナー
バッター
キャッチャー

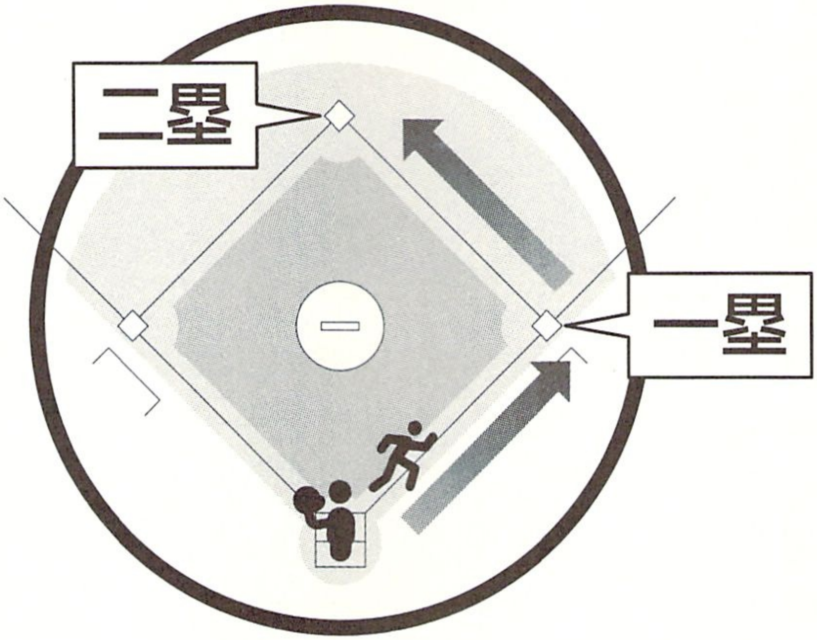
《姫路瑞希の想像しているヒットエンドラン》


Hit!
（襲う）
And
（そして）
Run!
（逃げる）

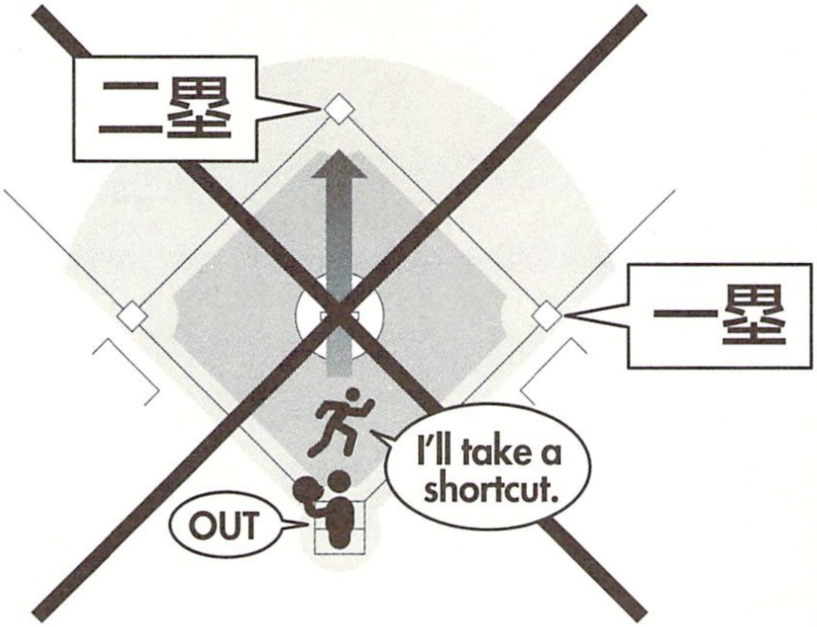
※ヒットエンドランとは?

ピッチャーの投球と同時にランナーが次の塁へとスタートし、バッターもその投球を打って進塁を狙うという、野球における戦術の一つ。

○正しい二塁の進み方



×誤った二塁の進み方


二塁
一塁
I'll take a shortcut.
OUT

"Shouko."

"..."

"Shouko."

"..."

"Oi, Shouko."

"...Ah...sorry. What is it, Yuuji?"

"Hand it over."

"...Eh...I think it can't be helped."

"What do you mean it can't be helped? Just hand that thing over to me."

"...But..."

"No buts. Stop saying so much and hand it over to me."

"...But...I'm not pregnant yet..."

"Hold on, we seemed to have skipped a lot of parts and into some unbelievable part!"

"?"

"Why are you revealing such a puzzled look...what in the world are you thinking I was asking you to hand over?"

"...Breast milk."

"Okay. This isn't a question about the word usage, but a communication breakdown."

"...Am I right?"

"DAMN RIGHT YOUR ARE! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR BRAIN? HOW CAN THERE BE SUCH A RIDICULOUS ANSWER!?"

"...I'm thinking of the life I'll have with Yuuji after we get married."

"Really? A family life after getting married. I see. But even so, your answer's way too creepy!"

"...I'm discussing with Yuuji about having 10+ children."

"Hold on, I think you just added one more digit there."

"...Yuuji wanted 37, but I wanted 38, so we ended up quarreling over it."

"If we ended up with that many children, I don't think having one less will matter much anyway."

"...No matter how good the relationship between husband and wife are, there are some parts where I can't back away."

"Oh, okay okay. I'm fine with it, is that alright?"

"...Oh yeah. If it wasn't breast milk, what does Yuuji want me to hand over?"

"I feel like I'm one huge pervert after hearing such a sentence..."

"...I won't forgive anyone who treats a pervert as Yuuji."

"YOU'RE THE BIGGEST REASON! AND DIDN'T YOU JUST MIX THE ORDER WRONG!? YOU'RE NOT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM SOMEONE WHO SUPPORTS PERVERTS!"

"...So, what is it about."

"You don't care about it and want to bring this to an end...ah, never mind. It's troublesome. What I want you to hand over is that large bag you're holding tightly onto."

"...There's nothing inside."

"Shouko, I got a wedding ring for you. Please hand your hand over to me."

"...I'm so happy."

"Sigh, really. You would hand your left hand over without hesitation when I mentioned a wedding ring? I don't know whether I should be freaked out by that or what. Okay let me see, there're...wedding magazines, hypnotism guidebooks, books on how to train dogs--HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, DAMN IT!"

"...Return it to me."

"WHO'LL RETURN IT TO YOU! I'LL KEEP ALL THESE FOR MY OWN SAFETY!"

"...I'll be bothered. There are things that I agreed to hand over to Kubo."

"I see. It's bad to not follow through your agreement. Take it back."

"...And your true thoughts?"

"Though I have to take some risk, since something fun will happen to Akihisa, I'll just close my eyes to this."

"...Yuuji can really be cruel at times."

"Shouko, what are you blabbering about? I'm just thinking about that guy's happiness."

"...If that's the case, let me think of how to have a happy family together with Yuuji."

"No need to think about that. Or rather, I don't want to listen to it."

"...First, it'll be Yuuji's marriage proposal...then, the confession..."

"Oi, are you listening to me? Anyway, you mixed up the order already!"

"...Wedding ceremony...honeymoon..."

"Not good...she's not listening to me anymore. It's like she just took drugs and got some hallucination."

"...A happy couple's life...a sweet honeymoon..."

"Ah, that's right. My mom seems like she got something she wants me to hand over to you. I remember she said something about the edge of the headdress or something."

"...Worth celebrating...the first child..."

"Oi Shouko, I'm putting that in."

"...Her name's Shoyu (soy sauce)...is a girl..."

"Oi, are you listening?"

"...A beautiful house...the children running around...and a puppy with a leash..."

"Oh well, I'll just put it in then."

"...And then, a tied and locked up Yuuji..."

"THERE DEFINITELY WON'T BE ANY HAPPINESS IN THAT FAMILY! THE WORD 'HAPPINESS' DEFINITELY CAN'T BE LINKED TO ME!"

"...Ah, I'm sorry. I'm just thinking about something...what did you say?"

SHOUKO KIRISHIMA

"If the definition of a happy family is me using a dog house as a home, then where will the puppy stay in...there're too many things I could argue about...anyway, take this."

"...Ah, thank you for returning it to me."

"Make sure to hand it over to Kubo!"

"...I'll hand it over to him after school."

"Hm, with that, Kubo and Akihisa should be rather happy."

"...Yoshii? Why?"

"That's because a lot of things will happen. Akihisa's life is going to be a lot more interesting."

The First Question

Please read through the following passage and answer the following question.

At the end of the 19th century, the Prime Minister of Germany developed the world's first Health Insurance Policy with the aim of helping the poor. At the same time, he also introduced the Socialist Legislation. The Legislation is often called the '( ) and Whip Policy'.

First Question: Please state the name of the Prime Minister at that time.

Second Question: Please fill in the blanks.

Himeji Mizuki's Answer:

'Q1: Bismarck Q2: (Candy) and Whip Policy'

Teacher's comments:

That's correct. Under the name of politics, Bismarck pushed hard for a Health Insurance Policy--in other words, it was to give 'candy' to the people. On the other hand, the socialist legislation's 'whip' suppressed the citizens. Giving them candy and the whip at the same time. There are many instances of this method being used, not just in politics.

Tsuchiya Kouta's Answer:

KOUTA TSUCHIYA

'Q1: Elizabeth'

Teacher's Comments

Whip--> Your Highness--> Queen Elizabeth.

Recently, I started to understand your trail of thoughts. Sensei's emotions are really complicated.

Yoshi Ahikisa's Answer:

'Q2: (Whip) and whip policy'

Teacher's Comments

That's too many whips.

In front of us, Ironman's arms are folded as he silently stares at us class F students. Facing our homeroom teacher, our class representative Sakamoto Yuuji says in a lecturing tone.

"Nishimura-sensei. Don't you think we need more details to satisfy our thirst for knowledge?"

Yuuji's eyes are stared deep into the other person's eyes. These words can most likely reach the ears, and even the heart.

But Ironman doesn't answer as he stares at Yuuji and waits for him to continue on.

Yuuji smiles, perhaps satisfied with his attitude and says,

"Since ancient times, all the technological development had a shadow of war behind it. The development of iron wasn't meant for industrial purpose, but to create swords and armor. Horses weren't bred to be domesticated, but to be trained into war horses for soldiers to ride on. If I need to specify a few modern examples, the development of nuclear technology was meant to be created for war."

"..."

Ironman still remains silent and doesn't say anything.

"With technology developed into such a positive outcome, the darkness of humans warring with each other still remains. This may be an exaggeration, but because of the dangerous intent of 'war', technology was able to develop so rapidly, and this is a fact that can't be changed."

"..."

Ironman still doesn't say anything.

"The original technology was developed with curiosity as the driving force. Since ancient times, no matter where it is, this logic won't change."

"..."

"But if we need to have a more effective outcome to this motivation--through real examples, most of the scenarios are 'a detailed motive' of fighting, called the 'victory of war'."

"..."

"What I mean isn't that war is necessary. A lot of people will die, and we'll be killing each other--in terms of animal instincts, isn't this the biggest cardinal sin and act of stupidity that goes against what we are?"

"..."

"However, even though we know that it's stupid, as long as well can learn the lessons behind it, there will be value. This is the truth behind the saying 'a curious mind will have a detailed aim and get a good outcome' - having said so much, I suppose sensei understands what I mean."

After Yuuji said till here, Ironman, who kept silent up till now, finally responds,

"Sakamoto, I understand what you mean. Like what you said, having a sense of curiosity is unrelated to the aim, and I don't deny it. However--"

Ironman puts down the folded arms and clearly tells everyone.

"--I won't be returning those A-books to you people."

"""DAAAAMMMMMMNNNNNNNN IIIIIIIITTTTTTTT!!!!!!!"""

Ironman's merciless words cause all the boys in class F to weep tears as we cry out in protest.

The new term started, and a large squad of teachers that don't seem to have any blood or tears got their defensive line set up and blocked us, the people who still worked hard to get to school even while rubbing our sleepy eyes. Before we could even resist, we could only see all our personal items get confiscated, so that's why we were giving a speech to Ironman.

"WHY, NISHIMURA-SENSEI!? DIDN'T YOU LISTEN TO THAT IMPASSIONATE SPEECH BY YUUJI!? IF WE WANT TO UNDERSTAND MORE ABOUT THE SUBJECT 'HEALTH EDUCATION' AND INCREASE OUR KNOWLEDGE OF IT, IT'S NECESSARY FOR US TO 'UNDERSTAND THE A-BOOKS'!!"

"Stop reading those hi-class A-books that have no relation with studying. How old are you anyway?"

"ASKING ME HOW OLD I AM!? HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!? THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH AGE!"

"Look carefully, isn't it clearly labelled '18 and above'!!?"

Uu...this damned teacher actually used such logic against us!

"PLEASE NISHIMURA-SENSEI! PLEASE RETURN THOSE BOOKS TO US!!"

"WE...WE MUST HAVE THOSE BOOKS NO MATTER WHAT!!!"

"PLEASE! PLEASE GIVE US A LIFELINE TO HEALTH EDUCATION!!"

"PLEASE, NISHIMURA-SENSEI!!"

"""PLEASE!!!"""

"QUIET! STOP USING THAT CASUAL PLEADING TONE THAT WOULD APPEAR IN HOT-BLOODED TV DRAMAS FOR ME TO RETURN THE A-BOOKS TO YOU!!"

The class' sincere wish never reached Ironman's heart. How can there be such a cruel and heartless teacher in this world!?

"If that's the case, would you consider something, sensei?"

"What do you want, Yoshii? I don't have time to listen to your nonsense."

"Those aren't A-books. Those are reference books for us to study health education."

"Everyone, go get ready. We're starting lesson. Self-study period is about to end as well."

We at our wits end. If this keeps up, our precious treasures will...

"DAMN IT! IF THAT'S THE CASE, WE'LL GET THEM BACK WITH OUR ABILITY! WE'LL BET OUR LIVES AGAINST IRONMAN FOR OUR REFERENCE BOOKS (A-BOOKS)!!"

"WOOOOHHH!!!"

Everyone stood up and surround Ironman. We have the advantage in numbers, and even if the enemy's a superhuman freak, we can't possibly lose.

"Kuku...so you brats have guts."

But even when he's facing such a dangerous situation, Ironman doesn't look like he's about to waver.

"ALL OF YOU, BRING IT ON!!!"

"YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!!"

Facing the hated sworn enemy of ours, all the boys in our class F clench our fists and charge at him.

☆

"That guy's...definitely not human..."

My bad friend who was talking enthusiastically just now, Sakamoto Yuuji, muttered bitterly. He has solid physique and is used to fighting, but after he was just punched hard, he couldn't even get up even till now.

"Yeah...why is it that he could take on 47 high school guys like that..."

Before I could even summon my summoned beast, I got choked on the neck and fainted. My classmates who fell beside me either got choked or got tossed over the shoulder. And after one cross immobilization, Ironman proceeded to crush us all with all sorts of judo techniques. And even against so many people, he was able to win easily even after controlling his force such that we don't have any wounds on us. Ironman's not an ordinary person no matter how we see it! Are all people who like Ironman triathlon this amazing?

"...Those movements are already equivalent to that of a human weapon."

Another classmate of mine, Muttsulini, real name is Tsuchiya Kouta, lowered his shoulders and muttered dejectedly. Anyone can tell from his nickname that he's a guy whose driving force in this world is on ERO. The bitter loss of having his A-books confiscated, he should be more dejected than anyone else. On a side note, Muttsulini used a taser attack, but in a short moment, his weapon got taken and he ended up being tasered instead. To be able to take away the weapon from the fast Muttsulini, it's impossible to do this without being at the pinnacle of martial arts.

"I say, you guys. Why are you always united in such situations...."

Giving us a 'really, what's with you guys look' is one of the few girls in class F, Shimada Minami. She's a girl with long slender limbs and a ponytail and a part that's a lot flatter than normal...but I'll just add the wounds on me if I say that. Better not say that. If I continue to take more guilt and pain, maybe my daily life will be badly influenced.

"United? Do we look that united?"

"Well, more than being united...I just want to say, why would the guys in class...bring such stuff to school..."

Saying that, Minami's face start to blush a bit. She should have seen the covers of some of those books.

"Well, guys have some things that they have to do no matter what."

"What exactly was the reason that all the guys in class would bring such a thing..."

As summer vacation ended, Muttsurini Company organized a 'Collection report festival (summer)', only to be met with an inspection. Did someone leak the news to those teachers? To actually detect our underground information network, we shouldn't underestimate those teachers' information network after all.

"But it can't be helped that they were confiscated. Well...and Akihisa-kun, I feel that it's a little too early for all of you to touch those books..."

Speaking up as well is another one of our healer girls—Himeji Mizuki-san. According to rumours amongst the 2nd years, the long, gentle hair on her, the presence she gives, and a certain part of her body seem to release anions. Also, her voice causes my dejected will to recover.

"Uu...even if you say that, I really can't accept it..."

THAT WAS MY PRIZED COLLECTION!! I WAS BARELY ABLE TO HIDE IT FROM MY SIS, AND NOW IT GOT CONFISCATED AT SCHOOL BECAUSE I WAS UNAWARE...IS THERE A PLACE IN A WORLD FOR ME TO HIDE SAFELY!!?

"Spot-check? It wasn't too long ago that they had a sudden spot-check. No wonder everyone let their guard down."

Another one of class F's opposite gender, Hideyoshi, consoled me. He has slender limbs and a soft and shiny hair, and a cute smile with that. Though he kept stressing that he's a guy, I feel that Hideyoshi should open his eyes wide and look at reality.

"It's true that it was unexpected. I got some little things confiscated by sensei, like DVDs, magazines, and my little pillow..."

"Yeah....I got a few things confiscated...like CDs, light novels, and my little pillow..."

What's going on? I seem to have heard something that an ordinary high school student normally won't bring to school.

"What the heck, so Himeji and Shimada got things confiscated. What about you, Hideyoshi?"

"Um...some props I wanted to use in drama were confiscated by him, and I actually got a handheld console game confiscated..."

Hideyoshi answered Yuuji bitterly.

Speaking of which, Hideyoshi seem to be acting in a modern drama now. Since his costumes got confiscated the last time, it's impossible to ask Ironman to return that to him.

"...I actually forgot to be cautious of spot-checks..."

Muttsurini, who's already frail-looking, curls his back, looking even smaller. If this guy actually cautiously analysed the situation, he should have noticed that the teachers intended to carry out a spot-check. This time, everyone seemed to have been too careless. I suppose one of the reasons why we were so careless was because we focused on the preparation of the 'Collection report festival (summer)'.

"To actually come up with a spot-check plan on the 2nd years...the teachers should have planned this in a meeting while we were still having summer vacation."

"Really, those teachers' methods are so underhanded."

And it was on the day after school opening. That's really too much. If it happened on the day itself, everyone would have some sense of cautiousness, but everyone would definitely drop their guard on the second day. It's true that the school rules indicated that 'items that aren't related to the teaching curriculum are forbidden', but this is too strict no matter what.

"Sigh. Good thing our handphones weren't confiscated. That's the only good thing, I guess..."

"But it will still be confiscated immediately if it suddenly rings in the middle of class."

Perhaps considering that there may be a need for a sudden emergency call, the teachers didn't confiscate handphones even when finding them. But Yuuji's right. If it rings in the middle of class, it will definitely be confiscated,

"Oh yeah, Akihisa, do you have anything else that got confiscated other than those picture albums?"

Hideyoshi asked as he pointed at my back. I really feel regretful about that he sounded like I got other things confiscated besides those picture albums, But facts are facts, so I can't argue back. Speaking of what Ironman confiscated...

"Well, books, CDs, games, photos (of Himeji-san, Minami and Hideyoshi in swimsuits)..."

"So not only those picture albums got confiscated, even ordinary photos were confiscated...those teachers have stone hearts."

"Yeah...I just bought them from Muttsurini Company today, and I didn't even manage to see any of them..."

And I came here so early in the morning just to buy them. What a waste...

"Really a pity...I always looked forward to hugging this photo...and even wanted to put a picture of the person in the swimsuit on it."

"Me too. I thought that I could have a good dream tonight..."

Why would Himeji-san and Minami agree with me?

"Then what about you, Yuuji? What else did you lose?"

If I'm to continue asking Himeji-san and Minami, I feel that I will be severely depressed, so I decided to ask Yuuji.

"My MP3 player got confiscated. I just added a few new songs to it yesterday. Damn it! That infuriates me!"

Yuuji said that unhappily. I see, Yuuji's MP3 player got confiscated again. I remember something like that happened before...

"Speaking of which, Muttsurini, your camera got confiscated again, right?"

"...(Nods head)."

Muttsurini looks devastated as he nods his head. If he joins the photography club, he would definitely be allowed to carry a camera—NOT! Besides, he's always taking those kinds of pictures anyway...

"...Even the memory card with those photos got confiscated. I can't sell them for the time being."

"""EEHHHHH!!!???"""

How, how did this happen? He can't sell photos at this time? Being unable to see the greatness of these photos even when knowing that they're there, that's basically torture for me!!

"DO SOMETHING, MUTTSURINI! DON'T YOU PREPARE BACK-UPS OR SOMETHING?"

"THAT'S RIGHT, TSUCHIYA-KUN! DON'T YOU HAVE BACK-UP DATA!?"

"Should be able to find them by searching the computers, right?"

How can Muttsurini possibly make the error of not backing-up ordinary people would do? Saying that he's unable to sell them, that's definitely a lie!!

"...I do have time, but it'll be a while before I can retrieve them."

"""How, how did it end up like this..."""

On hearing his answer, Minami, Himeji-san and me inadvertently collapsed onto the floor, using our hands to support ourselves. It's true that Muttsurini has way too many photos. If he has to recover the data of all the photos, it may really take a long time. In other words, we have to wait for him to save those photos and refine them before we can finally get the finished product, and we can only wait and wither.

"Oi, did you hear that?"

"I did! Seems like he said it will be a while before he can finally sell them...I might as well die if I have to wait until I can see Himeji, Shimada and Kinoshita in swimsuits!"

"Not just that. I heard that there were also photos of Kirishima and Kudou and other beatiful onee-sans....if I can't see those photos, I'll, I'll actually..."

Moans of agony could be heard from all over the classroom. To us guys who aren't popular with girls, Muttsurini's photos are the only ones who can give life to us.

"Oi, Yuuji, now what? Are we doing 'that'?"

"That's right...if we just allow this abuse of power to happen, there will be even more troubles to our school life...alright, let's do this, Akihisa! Wait till those teachers, especially Ironman, leave the staff room at lunch break. We'll sneak in and get back our dreams and hopes!!"

"ALRIGHT!"

In order to get back those confiscated items, Yuuji revived.

"...I can't just let Yuuji and Akihisa fight this tough battle."

Muttsurini's rejuvenated as well. His eyes are as determined as before. As expected of Muttsurini, the nickname 'silent pervert' isn't just for show!

"Hold it, you guys!"

"It's a no-go if you forget about us!"

"Hehe, aren't we good buddies?"

"Ev, everyone..."

Before I noticed it, all the guys in class F have already stood up.

That's right, even though our precious treasures were confiscated, we will never cry to bed. Once we snatch the possibility back, we will get back what belongs to us with courage, perseverance and teamwork! Even if there's a little hope, we will never give up!

"Well, actually, everyone, please calm down..."

At this moment, a voice stopped us. The person who stopped us from rushing to the office—

"...Himeji-san?"

—Is Himeji-san, whose hands are cupped in front of her chest.

After everyone turned to look at her, Himeji-san finally says what she feels.

"Akihisa-kun, Sakamoto-kun...I feel that this isn't right."

"What you're talking about...is it referring to sneaking into the staff room?"

"That's right."

Himeji-san nodded her head slightly. Well...even if you think that it's bad, but...

"But if we don't do this, those confiscated items won't come back. Himeji-san, you want to get back those things Ironman confiscated, right?"

We already tried whimpering to beg for them, but it was futile. If that's the case, we have no other choice but to forcefully grab our own things back with our own hands.

"As, as for that, if sensei's willing to give us back those things, I'll be really happy...but besides, we were the ones who broke the school rules in the first place..."

Saying that, Himeji-san lifted her head and looked up at me. Uu...seeing her look at me like this, I really feel that I'm doing something bad here....

"Sigh, Mizuki's right. Who asked us to break the rules first? If we won't accept our punishment and create another problem, it would be too..."

Minami agreed with Himeji-san.

"That's right, so I feel that it's bad to sneak into the staff room. And...it's sly no matter what I think."

Sly, is it...it's true that we broke the rules and got our stuff confiscated. And sneaking into the staff room to get back those stuff isn't a manly thing.

"...Yuuji, what do we do now? Himeji-san already said this. Sneaking into the staff room, it's a bit too..."

Really, my enthusiasm subsided.

"Ah...what do you mean by that. Since Himeji and Shimada already said that, we can only think of another way..."

No, not just Yuuji. I guess everyone else in class is thinking the same, because they're all looking rather awkward.

"Akihisa-kun, Sakamoto-kun, everyone...do you understand what I mean?"

"Yeah. We understand what Himeji and Shimada meant. So it came down to that, huh?"

Trying to retract back what he just said, Yuuji declares,

"—THIS ISN'T THE TIME FOR SNEAKY LITTLE TRICKS!! WE'RE GOING TO KILL IRONMAN AND GET BACK OUR ITEMS HEAD ON, ISN'T THAT RIGHT!!?"

"THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT!!"

It's really not manly of us to do such sneaky stuff in front of the girls. How can we let them see us in such an embarrassing manner. If we're going to do that, let's party!!

Thus, us class F guys decided to launch a sudden battle during lunch break.

☆

"So I say, why are you guys so simple-minded..."

After that, we sat straight and ended up kneeling on the hard floor of the detention room (without chairs too). Under Ironman's supervision, we could only finish the pile of supplementary questions obediently.

"Damn it, that's too dirty! Taking our precious and beating us up badly, now they even set an ambush of summoned beasts in the staff room...those teachers are too despicable!!"

"Yeah. They actually set an ambush against our manly head-on attack...that's not something a mature adult should have!!"

"Yoshii, Sakamoto. Both of you actually have time to talk. I'll give you a present."

""AAHH!!""

Pomp! Another book was added on us. I don't think it's possible to answer them all today...

"THAT'S TOO DESPICABLE!! YOU'RE DEFINITELY NOT HUMAN, YOU BLACK GORILLA!!"

"YOU BLACK GORILLA!! YOU NEVER INTENDED TO LET US GO HOME TODAY!!"

"Speaking of which, it seems like both of you haven't handed in your holiday assignments, right?"

Pomp! Another assessment book landed in front of us.

"That's interest for handing in your homework late. If you hand them in a week later, I'll add another book."

""AAARRRRGGGGGHHHH--!!!""

We can't take it anymore! This demonic teacher's just trying to wreck us mentally before killing us!!

"Yoshii and Sakamoto are both idiots...they clearly didn't value their lives when they went up against that gorilla."

"Wouldn't we be alright if we followed that gorilla obediently?"

"It's because they spent all their energy resisting that the gorilla has his eyes on them."

"Speaking of which, I just remembered. You guys haven't handed in your summer holiday assignments. Well, relax, I'm impartial, so I'll let everyone pay the same amount of interest."

"""UUUBBBOOOOOOAAAAAHHHHHHHHH---!!!"""

The holiday assignments that weren't handed in, the supplementary questions, and the additional questions...our homework load just increased. Forcing us to this extent, what kind of sick interests do they have!!!

"Damn you, Ironman...I'll pay you back for this!"

"That bastard, we'll wait and see!"

"...I will never forget this grudge!"

"Watch out when you walk down an empty dark street at night!"

"Watch it, I'll stick tacks in your shoes!"

"If that's the case, I'll spread the rumours that Ironman's a homo in school..."

"And another book."

"""UUUBBBOOOOOOAAAAAHHHHHHHHH---!!!"""

The 3 girls who didn't take part in the raid are having lessons with class E, and the 47 guys of class F are imprisoned in the detention room. This is really too tragical. Just looking at all the class F guys being unable to take the heat and having the few girls of hope taken from them, and the lecturer's this Ironman, our anger rose to unlimited edges.

"Really, why don't you learn...since you can spend so much energy on such useless stuff, use that exercise to spend off that excess energy. It's about time for the sports meet too."

Ironman sighed and said.

The 2nd semester just started, and the grand-scale activity--Fumitzuki Gakuen's sports meet is suddenly around the corner.

The main aim of this event is to ensure that the students who spent the long summer vacation relaxing to rejuvenate themselves. Since everyone's gotten giddy over vacation and can't concentrate during lessons, how about having a sports meet to get everyone on track--I guess that's what the school thinks, right? It's really something that that principal would think of."

"Okay, I still have to go back to clear up that staff room you guys messed up, so stay here and do your homework. If you dare to run...I'll show you what Hell's like."

Leaving behind this ominous threat, Ironman turns and walks out of the detention room, and even locks the room up from the outside before leaving. Don't think of leaving, he basically set up all precautions.

"Oh yeah, it's soon to be time for the sports meet. Speaking of sports meet...about that, right?"

Yuuji smirks.

"Yeah, that."

I smirk as well. Looking closely, every student around us is smirking as well. It seems that we're all thinking the same thing.

"Recalling these past 5 months...no, including the past 1 year 5 months ever since we entered this school, the teachers in this school really made us suffer."

"Like kneeling on the corridor, confined in the detention room, and even taking away our Bibles (A-books), and even throwing us into that classroom with such lousy facilities, and even letting all the 2nd year guys get suspended. And also....we saw the principal naked!!"

Everyone here started letting out 'yeah, that's right' and sighs, nodding away forcefully in agreement. All the guys in this class are comrades who've been through the same situations. Up till now, we were bullied and looked down on. There's nothing different.

"But the sports meet's about to start. At that time--we can take revenge on those teachers!!"

These words seem to burn the passion in Yuuji's heart, as he clenches his fists and stands up with swagger.

"ALRIGHT!! LET'S PARTY!!!"

"WE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR, BUT THIS YEAR'S GOING TO BE DIFFERENT!!"

"THOSE DAMNED TEACHERS...WE'LL MAKE THEM CHANGE THEIR OPINIONS ON US!!"

My classmates energetic roars can be heard from all over the place. It seems like everyone felt the same way about the teachers. Including what happened today, the teachers' violent actions made us swear deep inside that we have to take revenge.

"YOU GUYS BETTER LISTEN UP. THERE WON'T BE SUCH A CHANCE IN THE FUTURE! UP TILL NOW, EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED IN SCHOOL, ALL THAT ANGER OF BEING HUMILIATED, BEING ABUSED. WHEN ELSE ARE WE GOING TO TAKE REVENGE!!!"

"THAT'S RIGHT! WE MUST TAKE REVENGE!!"

"USE THIS CHANCE TO TAKE REVENGE ON WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST!!"

"WE MUST USE THE CHAOTIC SITUATION OF THE SPORTS MEET TO MAKE THE TEACHERS SUFFER!!!"

That's right. Such a chance to take revenge is there for the taking. Our sworn enemies are the teachers, and we can use the sports meet as excuse to take revenge on them. It's the perfect opportunity.

"FROM NOW ON, EVERYONE'S TO GET READY! EVEN IF WE HAVE TO CRAWL ON THE FLOOR TO ENDURE THE HUMILIATION, WE HAVE TO STORE ENERGY FOR THIS GREAT CHANCE! WHILE WE WON'T BE DECLARING WAR ON THEM, IT WILL BE THE BEST CHANCE TO TAKE REVENGE ON THEM DURING THE SPORTS MEET. UNDER THE GUISE OF COMPETITION, WE WILL ACT AS IT WERE AN ACCIDENT AND TAKE REVENGE ON THEM. LISTEN UP, OUR REAL AIM IS--"

"""--TEACHERS-VS-STUDENTS BASEBALL MEET!!!"""

Everyone clenched their fists and shouted out in unison.

Watch it Ironman, damned old granny and the other teachers! During this teachers-vs-students baseball meet, we'll definitely inflict a great amount of grudge on you...!!!

The Second Question

YUUJI SAKAMOTO

Remember these baseball rules!

Please explain the following baseball terminology

'Touch Up.'

Sakamoto Yuuji's answer

'When the batter hits a fly ball, the base-runner, who's off the base, must check the movement of the ball. The base-runner can only run off once the ball lands in the glove.'

Teacher's comment

That's correct.

Himeji Mizuki's answer

'To do a perverted act.'

Teacher's comment

I'm really shocked that you don't know the definition of 'touch up' in baseball, yet you understand the English definition of it. It's correct in the English subtext, but it's wrong in terms of baseball.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer

'When the batter hits a fly ball, the base-runner, who's off the base, must check the movement of the ball and the short skirts of the cheerleader girls. The base-runner can only do a perverted act once the ball lands in the glove.'

Teacher's comment

Calm down, your answer has the correct knowledge and your derogatory thoughts mixed together.

NOTICE

Fumizuki Gakuen's sport meet.

Bonding match. Teachers-vs-students baseball meet.

The above mentioned events will be modified and competed with summoned beasts.

Fumizuki Gakuen Principal Todou Kaoru.

連絡事項

文月学園体育祭　親睦競技
生徒･教師交流野球

上記の種目に対し
本年は実施要項を変更し、
競技に召喚獣を用いるもの
とする。

文月学園学園長　藤堂カヲル

DAMN OLD GRANNY--!!!

Forcefully pushing the principal's room's door aside, Yuuji and I shouted.

“What now, you brats? Being so noisy so early in the morning?”

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BEING SO NOISY SO EARLY IN THE MORNING? IS IT TIME FOR SUCH WORDS, DAMNED OLD GRANNY!?”

Yuuji and I stormed toward the principal, who covered her eyes and looked unhappy, with the momentum of an army of tens of thousands.

It was hard that our whole class of guys managed to gather our grudge over the loss of our bibles(A-books) and rely on the teachers-vs-students match to take revenge on the teachers...but the moment we came to school this morning, we suddenly saw this notice. Of course we would be fuming.

“Why did you change the format of the match to summoned beasts? Now we can't even take revenge on the teachers and teach them a lesson!!”

“Didn't you just say the reason why the school needs to change the format to include summoned beasts...?”

Giving a 'really, you guys' look at Yuuji and me, the principal turned to look at the data in her hand. Is, is she even human?

“Do you know how hard we worked, how much we planned all the dirty tricks and practiced them...that's why you would say such inhumane things!!”

“You damned brats, you should use this focus on other things!”

Our great hard work got completely denied. What kind of educator is she?!

“Che, suddenly changing the format to a summoned beast battle, I guess it's about promoting the summoning system...the most important summoning system has been manipulated until it can be controlled by humans?”

Now that Yuuji said this, the principal frowned. Our school principal is more like a researcher than an educator. She will never let other people underestimate the technicalities of the summoning system.

“Forget about the summoning tournament and what happened during the summer, the summoning system is now completely in my grasp. If that's not the case, how can I let you people have the summoned beasts play baseball?”

Hearing her say that, I started to wonder. Now that she mentions it, it's true, but during the test of courage, our summoned beasts did become monsters, so obviously something wrong happened to the system...maybe it's because the system adjustments failed this time that caused our summoned beasts to become baseball midgets.

“Damned brats, hold it right there. What's with that expression of yours!? Did you think that I failed in the adjustments and caused the summoning system to be that of the baseball style was why I forced all of you to take part using summoned beasts? Are you thinking that way?”

We're thinking like that alright.

“Humph, I don't know what your idiotic brains are thinking, but I spent a lot of effort just to modify the summoning system into baseball style. I had to expand the system's effective range , designate the bat and gloves, and then I had to imagine the ball before creating it. How is it possible to create all these if it wasn't for the complete control system.”

Creating a ball through imagination, calculating the amount of air resistance through the shape of a ball, and the seamless curve-ball...these tough terminologies started coming out from the principal's mouth. I really don't understand what she's saying. Anyway—

“So now that the summoning system is alright, you want to let all the teachers and students see it for themselves?”

“—”

Ah, the principal's expression froze.

“Akihisa, you got to note of your word usage. See, because you guessed correct, that old granny's face just froze.”

Did I guess correctly? This person in front of us is a lot older than us, yet she does seem like a kid sometimes. Or rather...are all researchers like that?

“Of, of course not! Either way, as a school principal, I do want to have the students and teachers have a warm and cuddly interactive game.”

“Ah~really~that's amazing~”

“Amazing~I've all my respect for you~”

“You damned brats are so irritating!!”

Being able to say such a lie that can be seen through easily, it seems like we're rather half-baked.

“However, if that's the case, I guess it's impossible to revert the rules back to normal, right? Since the idea to let the summoned beasts play baseball was the old granny's idea.”

“Yeah, principal. Please retract that notice and let us play baseball normally!”

“I refuse.”

““WHY!!??””

“You just treated me like an idiot when you said that. How can you think that I'll grant your request like that?”

Unbelievable. She would actually refuse the earnest request of her cute students. Is she really the head of the school?

“Even if you didn't say anything, it's impossible to retract the notice since the settings are all set.”

The principal pushed a pile of hi-quality bound paper to us.

“Why did it end up like this...not asking for our agreement and doing such things on your own...”

“What nonsensical words are you talking about!? Why must I ask for your agreement?!?”

Damn it! If we knew that this would happen, we should have bribed the sports management committee. But this damned old granny would probably not listen to them.

Just when I clenched my teeth, thinking of some way to salvage this, Yuuji revealed a pondering look and then stared at the principal, saying,

“Now that it can't be changed...but if that's the case, wouldn't the difference between the teachers and the students be too great?”

“The difference you're talking about, you're referring to the difference in summoned beasts' strength between the teachers and the students? Ha! I thought that you have something else to say.”

“But principal, Yuuji's right! Aren't the teachers' score ridiculously high? And the marks are equivalent to power. If there's such a difference in power, how can we possibly win—”

“Stop saying such dumb things. This isn't normal fighting. I'm telling you to play baseball! If power alone could win, those professional baseball players would have been bodybuilders.”

“But...”

“Besides, Fumizuki Gakuen is a school that focuses on grades to increase the learning potential. The difference in grades would be the difference in strength. What's wrong about that?”

I couldn't say anything back at the principal when I heard that. She's right. We already knew of Fumitzuki Gakuen's educational policy before we entered this school, but we still chose this school.

“But even if you say that, even when knowing that there's a huge difference in ability, we can't possibly focus on playing baseball! So please revert it back to normal!”

“Ah, Akihisa, just hold on. Didn't I say this? That is impossible.”

I wanted to say something else, but Yuuji stopped me. Eh? Wasn't Yuuji talking about letting the principal revert the format?

“But Yuuji, that...”

“Mn, you're right. That will make us less focused when we play. So principal, how about it? If you want us to have some enthusiasm, you should prepare some prize for us, no?”

Thus, Yuuji raised that proposal to the principal in a matter-of-fact manner. Prize? What's this all about?

“Your proposal's really ridiculous. Either way, I can't produce some good prize at such short notice, right?”

“No, you don't have to prepare them, nor do you need to pay a single cent.”

No need to pay a single cent? That means—

“If we can beat the teachers, please return the things that were confiscated during the sudden spot-check. What do you think?”

“...I see. So you prefer something more realistic than a title?”

“Of course, it would be good if we could take revenge, but since we can't change rules that were fixed, it's pointless to grumble about it. It's better to get some realistic prize.”

Saying that, Yuuji smirked. Abandoning the name and getting the reward...on one hand, this seems like what Yuuji would do—but for some reason, I feel that something's not right. Uu, what's wrong...

“As for the sudden spot-check. I think that not just the students, even the teachers said a lot to you regarding that, right?”

“...Humph, if you didn't want your items to be confiscated, you shouldn't have brought such ridiculous things to school. What do you treat school as!?”

Though it was all in the name of education, Fumizuki Gakuen's spot checks were a lot stricter than other schools. An ordinary school would return students' personal belongings back to them even after confiscating them. Not just the students, I guess it wouldn't be too much of a surprise to see teachers telling the principal that 'that's too much'.

“It's because of such a ruling that I would raise this proposal to you. If you can accept my proposal, we would obediently abide the tournament format. If you would give us a chance, we would do our best to hold back this dissatisfaction. To you right now, this should be a good deal, right?”

“So your unhappiness would explode because you guys don't know what's going on? I can just tell the students that there's 'a chance to get back the confiscated items', and even if you can't get them back, you guys would be angry at yourselves for losing instead of us teachers.”

“Mn, that's the case. No matter what, anyone would hate to be weak as they get plundered. But if there's a chance, even if humans fail to get what they want, they can unexpectedly accept such an outcome.”

Yuuji's again talking about some deep stuff with the principal. Basically, if we don't get a chance to fight back, everyone would feel bad. Is that the case?

“So that's the idea. What do you think, damned old granny?”

Yuuji turned to the side and faced the principal. I don't know what they're talking about, but it seems like I should go along with Yuuji.

“Please, damned old granny.”

I stood beside Yuuji and copied him as I stepped towards the principal.

Hearing us say that, the principal stroked her chin and said,

“So...regarding this, instead of a deal, you're begging me for it, right? But seeing you people beg me with that attitude, I can't possibly nod in agreement so easily.”

Uu...I tried my best to endure that ugly 'you damned old granny' that was rising up to my mouth, because I was trying to understand what she was saying.

“Excuse me...but what are you talking about here?”

“Calling someone older than you 'old granny'...how can I agree to you brats and your request?”

I see. Since she doesn't like people calling her 'old granny', I'll just repeat this.

“Sorry for that, 'damned'.”

“Like what 'damned' said, we should be more careful.”

“HOLD ON A MINUTE! YOU JUST REMOVED THE 'OLD GRANNY' FROM THE 'DAMNED OLD GRANNY'!”

The principal twisted her face in anger. She's too stubborn already. How can we possibly accommodate so many requests.

“Forget about that. What do you think?”

“Uu, well...during the sports meet, there will be guests from other countries. It will be best if you guys can behave yourselves...the summoned beast baseball tournament match between class 2-A and 3-A will be shown to them. As for you stupid brats, just focus on the baseball match. Then I'll let the guests view the other sports meet event. That should be safer...”

It seems like we got treated as some trouble. But at this point, better close one eye and don't argue too much with her.

“Really, you guys. Alright, I accept.”

“Really? Thanks for helping us out then.”

Yuuji and the principal nodded.

Now then, though our aim to revert the tournament format back wasn't accomplished, at least we managed to gain an opportunity to get back our confiscated items. That shouldn't be much of a drop off.

“Since we've decided, we'll write it in black and white, and we have to write about the prize, otherwise we will be bothered if you use the line 'I never heard of that before'.”

“Damned brat, that's my line.”

Then, Yuuji and the principal started bickering with each other, and started writing down the rules of the tournament.

“So only one subject is to be used for each match of the summoned beast baseball match?”

“I don't mind. But wouldn't you guys feel bothered if it's just one subject?”

“Yeah. If possible, I hope to have different subjects for all innings.”

“Okay, I can agree to that. It's related to studies anyway.”

“That's a great help to us. If that's the case, how about writing down 'you must choose one of the taught subjects' instead of 'using the subjects for the summoned beasts' to make it easier to understand, right?”

“I'm fine as long as it doesn't distort the original meaning of the rules itself.”

Both of them continued to talk (or rather, it's just Yuuji negotiating), and the blueprint for the baseball rules were almost set. It's great that things are going smoothly due to Yuuji's plans, but I have a feeling that something's not right...

Summoned beasts baseball tournament rules (school rules)

1. During each inning, one of the taught subjects is to be used.
2. In each match, if the subject's used once in the previous innings, it is not to be used again in another inning.
3. One of the non-participating teachers is to act as umpire. Also, the other teacher who's in charge of invigilating the match is forbidden from moving.
4. Once the ball that's batted flies out of the summoning field (summoned beast baseball style), it will be considered a homerun if it's in play. If not, it's to be considered a foul ball.
5. There will be 5 innings of offense and defense. If the score remains the same, the game will be extended to 7 innings. If the match can't be decided within 7 innings, it will end in a tie.
6. Each team is to hand in the list of players. Those players whose names aren't on the list will be unable to take part in the match. Also, this rule is applicable to the bench players and the teachers in charge of the match.
7. There will be one player for each defensive position and 2 bench players, making a total of 11 players.

8. When the match is held, the sports meet events are of priority. If the match times overlap, each team can change the list of players at the last minute.
9. Other than these, the basic rules will be as of official baseball rules.[1]

SUMMONED BEAST BASEBALL TOURNAMENT RULES

校則

1. DURING EACH INNING, ONE OF THE TAUGHT SUBJECTS IS TO BE USED.

2. IN EACH MATCH, IF THE SUBJECT'S USED ONCE IN THE PREVIOUS INNINGS, IT IS NOT TO BE USED AGAIN IN ANOTHER INNING.

3. ONE OF THE NON-PARTICIPATING TEACHERS IS TO ACT AS UMPIRE. ALSO, THE OTHER TEACHER WHO'S IN CHARGE OF INVIGILATING THE MATCH IS FORBIDDEN FROM MOVING.

4. ONCE THE BALL THAT'S BATTED FLIES OUT OF THE SUMMONING FIELD (SUMMONED BEAST BASEBALL STYLE), IT WILL BE CONSIDERED A HOMERUN IF IT'S IN PLAY. IF NOT, IT'S TO BE CONSIDERED A FOUL BALL.

5. THERE WILL BE 5 INNINGS OF OFFENSE AND DEFENSE. IF THE SCORE REMAINS THE SAME, THE GAME WILL BE EXTENDED TO 7 INNINGS. IF THE MATCH CAN'T BE DECIDED WITHIN 7 INNINGS, IT WILL END IN A TIE.

6. EACH TEAM IS TO HAND IN THE LIST OF PLAYERS. THOSE PLAYERS WHOSE NAMES AREN'T ON THE LIST WILL BE UNABLE TO TAKE PART IN THE MATCH. ALSO, THIS RULE IS APPLICABLE TO THE BENCH PLAYERS AND THE TEACHERS IN CHARGE OF THE MATCH.

7. THERE WILL BE ONE PLAYER FOR EACH DEFENSIVE POSITION AND 2 BENCH PLAYERS, MAKING A TOTAL OF 11 PLAYERS.

8. WHEN THE MATCH IS HELD, THE SPORTS MEET EVENTS ARE OF PRIORITY. IF THE MATCH TIMES OVERLAP, EACH TEAM CAN CHANGE THE LIST OF PLAYERS AT THE LAST MINUTE.

9. OTHER THAN THESE, THE BASIC RULES WILL BE AS OF OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES.

☆

After our negotiations ended, we returned to class F. On the way, I finally realized the reason why I was so troubled.

Ahh, speaking of which...

"Yuuji, as for just now..."

"Are you talking about the summoned beast baseball tournament?"

"Mn, it sounds like a reasonable decision...but that's on the assumption—that we can win the match, right?"

Just now, Yuuji did say that 'if we win, the teachers will return the confiscated items back to us'. That's right, in other words—unless we 'win the tournament', we can't get back the prize. If we can give up our revenge to get back those confiscated items back, it does sound reasonable, but in fact, that's not the case. This is a tournament that has to be won with marks. How can we win against the teachers!? If that's the case, I might as well find a chance to vent all my anger and take revenge on them.

Hearing me say that, Yuuji revealed a 'it's rare that you would notice this' expression and glanced at me before saying,

"You're right. In terms of the outcome, if we can't win in the baseball tournament, it would have no meaning at all. Because she knew it, that damned old granny agreed to our request."

"So that's the case. But our opponents are those teachers. The chance of us winning against them is practically..."

"Mn, that's the case. Most likely, we can't win if we play normally..."

There's a whole lot of difference between those teachers' marks and ours. Though we do have to look at the subject tested, there's a whole lot of difference in skill.

"So Yuuji, what plan have you thought of?"

"Hm? What you talking about?"

"Stop playing dumb. You definitely looked like you were thinking of something when you gave that pondering look. And you decided those rules, right? You thought of a plan already, right?"

"Uu, that's the plan. How can I possibly fight a losing battle?"

"Yeah, so? What did you plan?"

"Like you said, I intend to use those rules—but it's interesting only when we do it. Besides, if I tell you now, you will definitely forget."

How rude, I just can't remember things occasionally.

"But Yuuji, why are you so enthusiastic all of a sudden? It seems like you didn't just get your MP3 player confiscated, is it?"

"And three deluxe edition picture albums."

"You actually managed to hide three of them in your house...aren't you too amazing?"

To actually be able to escape Kirishima-san's search and Yuuji's mom's natural instincts! Yuuji's way too amazing to be able to hide them like this...

"I hide them under the bookshelf, or in the ceiling board, or even wrapping them up in a completely waterproof package and dropping them into the freshwater fish tank. I spent a lot of effort on them..."

"So you couldn't immediately take them out to read."

So that's what they mean by mixing up the aim and the means.

"If I didn't do that, I couldn't protect those treasures. Besides, the level of those albums were already enough for me to use such drastic measures."

"I see. If they're so great, I want to read them."

"...Me too."

I nodded heads with Kirishima-san who was right beside me. How great are those picture albums? Since Yuuji said that, I'll try my best to get them back from the teachers and read through them.

"Okay, that'll be all for now. Yuuji and Kirishima-san can now develop their relationship."

"HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, AKIHISA! HOW CAN YOU ABANDON ME LIKE THAT AT THIS MOMENT!?"

Yuuji forcefully grabbed my wrist, but if I continued to stay here, I'll just see a devastating scene...

"...I really underestimated Yuuji. From now onward, no matter the basin or under the flower pots or the bathtub when Yuuji's bathing, I will inspect them carefully."

"OI, hold on a minute. THE REAL AIM OF THE LAST ONE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH INVESTIGATIONS!!"

"...Because I have a duty to check Yuuji's growth."

I see, so she has a need to check Yuuji's growth.

"—Hm?"

Hold on a minute. Speaking of this 'checking of growth'...doesn't that mean—

"Kirishima-san, let me ask you something..."

"...What is it?"

"Kirishima-san, did you...bathe with Yuuji before?"

"...Before middle school."

"HYYYYAAAHHHHHH!!!!"

"DANGER!!"

Che! He dodged! To be able to dodge that full-powered spinning kick of mine, this guy's reflexes are no joke...

"LISTEN TO ME, AKIHISA! IT WAS BEFORE MIDDLE SCHOOL, BUT WE NEVER HAD THEM WHEN IT WAS 5TH, 6TH GRADE—"

"...And only a few times after my breasts grew."

"HHHHYYYYYYYAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!!"

"WOOOHH!! ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME!!!?"

"SHUT UP YOU PAGAN...YOU HERETIC WHO STEPPED INTO THE HOLY PLACE THAT SHOULD NOT BE DEFILED!!...YOU SHALL PAY FOR THIS BLASPHEMY WITH DEATH!!! ALSO—"

"—YOU SHALL BE SUBJECTED TO THE MARTIAL LAW OF THE FFF!!!"

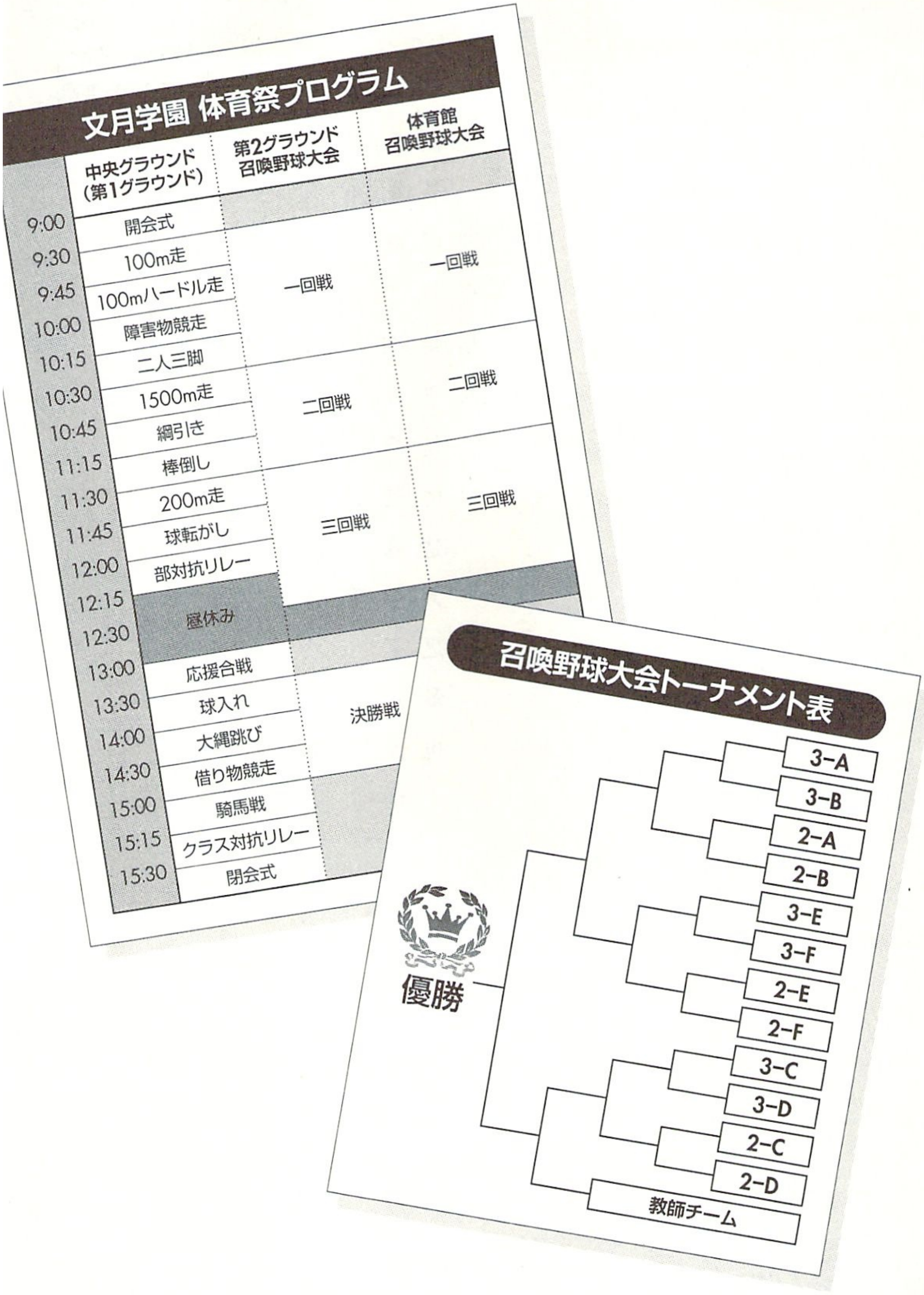
"HOLD, HOLD ON A MINUTE! WHEN DID YOU GUYS APPEAR!? I NEVER FELT YOUR PRESENCE UP TILL NOW!!! EVEN IF I DID BATHE WITH SHOUKO BEFORE, IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT ANYTHING HAP--GWWWOOOAAHHHH!!!"

"...Ah...Yuuji..."

"First class inquisitor Yoshii, thank you for fishing out this heretic. It's been tough on you."

"No no, I would like to thank you, leader Sugawa."

"...I just wanted to ask...about the 'if we win the baseball tournament, can we get back all the confiscated items'..."



文月学園 体育祭プログラム

	中央グラウンド（第1グラウンド）	第2グラウンド 召喚野球大会	体育館 召喚野球大会
9:00	開会式		
9:30	100m走	一回戦	一回戦
9:45	100mハードル走		
10:00	障害物競走		
10:15	二人三脚		二回戦
10:30	1500m走	二回戦	
10:45	綱引き		
11:15	棒倒し		三回戦
11:30	200m走	三回戦	
11:45	球転がし		
12:00	部対抗リレー		
12:15	昼休み		
12:30			
13:00	応援合戦		
13:30	球入れ	決勝戦	
14:00	大縄跳び		
14:30	借り物競走		
15:00	騎馬戦		
15:15	クラス対抗リレー		
15:30	閉会式		

召喚野球大会トーナメント表

優勝
3−A
3−B
2−A
2−B
3−E
3−F
2−E
2−F
3−C
3−D
2−C
2−D
教師チーム

The Third Question

Please read the text below and answer the following question:

> “The forces of King Xiang had arrived at the wall, having suffered casualties and lack of food."
> "The Han forces and the warlords surrounded them."
> "During the night, forces of Han surrounded the encampment of King Xiang and started singing folk songs of Chu. The leader of Chu was startled by this."
> *"Has Chu fallen into the Hans' hands? Since when did Chu have so many?"*
> "King Xiang stood up in the middle of the night and starting drinking.”[2]

Please write the idiom that was formed to describe Xiang Yu's attitude.

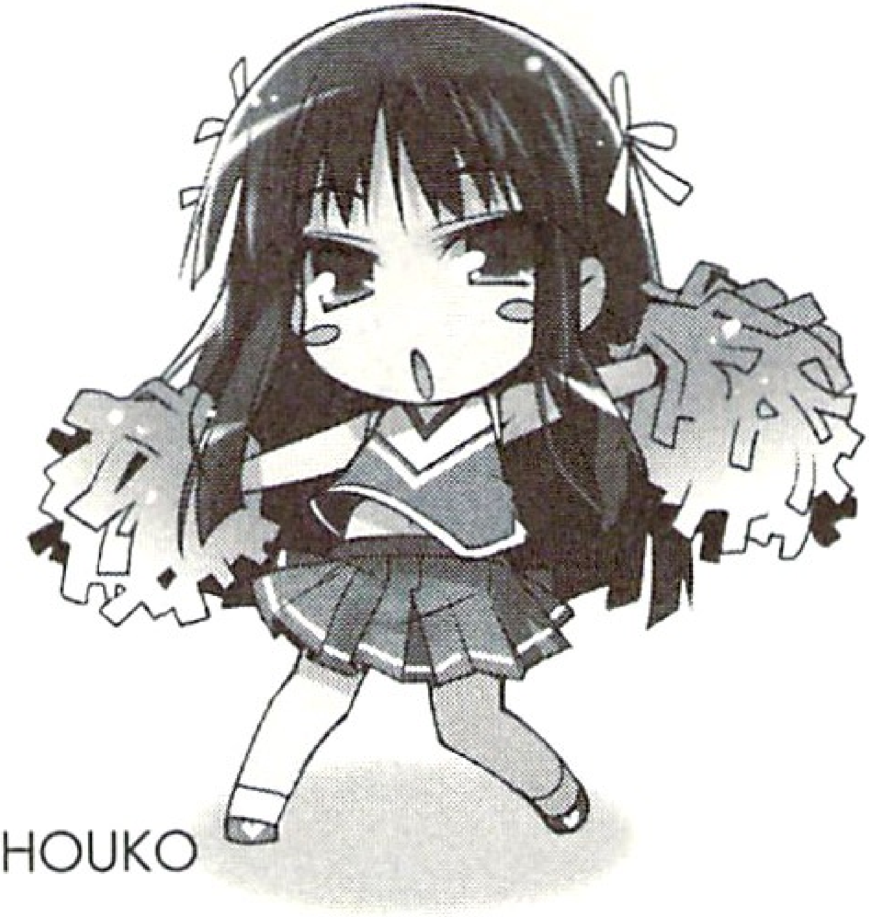
Himeji Mizuki's answer:

“Chu Song from 4 sides (, shimensoka).”

Teacher Comment

Correct answer. When the enemy forces started singing the 'Chu folk songs' his own comrades should be having, this meant that Xiang Yu's forces were trapped yet had no way to fight back. 'Being isolated and surrounded on all sides' is thus called 'Chu Song from 4 sides'.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer:



KIRISHIMA SHOUKO

“Strike first.”

Teacher's comment

He struck later.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer:

“Strike first.”

Teacher's comment:

He lost after attacking later, okay?

“The summoned beast baseball tournament will be held at the 2nd sports hall. Will all participating students please—”

The broadcast was aired through the loudspeakers all over the school.

Just like that, it's now the day of the sports meet.

After the boring opening ceremony ended, we stood up from the seats that were specially set for this sports meet and headed towards the baseball arena.

“Yuuji, who's our opponent in the first round?”

“I remember it should be our neighboring class in the same year. We're facing class E. See, this is the schedule.”

Yuuji handed an A4 sized paper to me, and there was a pyramid-shaped diagram schedule on it.

So we're facing class E...though it's our neighbor class, it seems like we didn't interact much with each other. We never faced them in a summon battle, and yet didn't really interact with them during the test of courage event. If I have to say it, the only time we really interacted with each other was during the peeping. In other words, I don't have any information on them.

“Is it okay for us to go up against class E? Will there be any problems?”

I asked Yuuji, who was walking beside. Besides, we have Himeji-san and Hideyoshi on our side, so I have a duty to make sure that they're alright.

“Mm...I don't think there will be much of a problem. I just said hello to their class rep for a bit, and her reaction was rather cute.”

“Eh? Really? You said cute, what sort of person is she?”

“If I have to say, it's...”

Yuuji would actually call her cute. Even if she's the opponent, I'm rather intrigued. How did class E's rep greet Yuuji.

“'Hello, I'm class E's rep, my name is Nakabayashi! We will definitely win today's match!', or something like that.”

“That person must be pretty muscular, right? She's not cute at all, right!?”

No matter how I think about this, I can't possibly link this sentence to the word 'cute'!

“I'm joking. She basically said, 'let's have a good game, we'll definitely not lose~☆ '. Well, that's roughly the tone class E's rep used.”

“I see. Okay~ we won't lose as well!”

“But she's from the rugby team.”

“That's someone who's ridiculously muscular, right!?”

Someone from the rugby team uses such a tone? That's annoying!

“I lied. Class E's rep is the leader of the girls' tennis club, Nakabayashi-taichou. She has a personality similar to Shimada.”

“And her appearance?”

“About the same as Iron—I was kidding!! Where're you running to, Akihisa!?”

“Your jokes aren't good for the heart, Yuuji!”

If she really has Minami's personality and Ironman's offensive power, we can't possibly win.

“Really...Yuuji, stop bullying Akihisa so much. That doesn't involve the main objective anyway. Speaking of which, how's E class like?”

This time, Hideyoshi, who was walking beside us, asked as well. It seems like he's not familiar with class E as well.

“Sorry, well...if there's a need to describe class E, it's that they're a 'sports class'.”

“A 'sports class'?”

“Yeah, Those guys from class E seem to be focused on sports. As they're busy with club activities, their scores were atrocious. However, their physical abilities and senses are amazing.”

So they were a class centered around club activities? No wonder they never took part in summoning battles much. To them, having good club facilities is better than class facilities.

“I see, so they're just a bunch of sporty idiots.”

Hmm...just when I nodded my head in understanding, a figure was walking up to me from the front. Hm, who's that?

“I DON'T WANT TO BE CALLED AN IDIOT BY YOU, YOU IDIOT!”

A girl with a headband saw me and started scolding me. I, I guess this is the first time I met her...

“Well, that...”

“IF WE'RE IDIOTS, THEN YOU CLASS F GUYS WHO'RE OF A LOWER LEVEL THAN US ARE SUPER BIG IDIOTS! YOU BIG IDIOT!!”

This girl with the head band looked really angry as she pointed at me and started scolding me. This is...

“Akihisa, this is class E's rep, the Nakabayashi I just told you about.”

Seeing me with a puzzled look, Yuuji gave me a rare kind explanation to solve the doubt in my heart.

Ahh, I see, so this is—

“So this is the girl who we just said was muscular all over the place and—”

“MUSCULAR ALL OVER THE PLACE? HOW DID YOU INTRODUCE ME!?”

The girl with the headband widened her eyes and shouted in disbelief.

Ah, sorry. I said the wrong thing. I should call her class E rep.

I used this time to recollect my feelings and stared at Nakabayashi-san. Her appearance did give the impression of being strong, but other than that, there was nothing too weird. That's great...finally, a normal person I don't get to interact with nowadays!

However, my stare just seemed like it created a misunderstanding in her, so Nakabayashi-san suddenly used her arms to wrap around her body and got away from me, shouting,

“WHA, WHAT'S WITH THAT EXPRESSION OF YOURS!? THAT'S WHY I HATE CLASS F IDIOTS!! LOOKING AT OTHER PEOPLE'S BODIES LIKE THIS, YOU GUYS ARE REALLY PERVERTS!!”

That's a serious misunderstanding, I didn't look at you like that.

“That's not true! I just thought that Nakabayashi-san plays rugby, so you should look somewhat like Ironman—”

“YOU'RE PICKING A FIGHT WITH ME, RIGHT!? YOU'RE JUST LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, AM I RIGHT!!?”

Not good, she just stared directly at me and looked extremely angry.

“Ahhh, calm down, brawn-haired girl, Akihisa just blurted that out accidentally.”

At that moment, Yuuji saved me at the right time just when I didn't know what to do. But what's with that 'brawn-haired'?

“Brawn-haired? You mean blond-hair? You idiot, I didn't dye my hair blond or anything like that. Do you want a checkup at the hospital?”

Nakabayashi-san seemed to be harboring the same doubt as me as she stared at Yuuji in disbelief.

“No no, I'm not talking about brawn-haired as in 'the hair is blond', but that even your hair is so well-trained that muscles came out.”

“And you dare to say that...”

“—That's what Akihisa thought.”

“WHAT DID YOU SAY!?”

“THAT'S A HUGE MISUNDERSTANDING!!!”

I got hit! I didn't say anything all all!!

“Oh ya, Nakabayashi, I forgot to ask you. Will E class be batting first or later?”

“I DON'T KNOW! JUST DO WHATEVER YOU WANT!”

“I see. Since you say that, we'll pitch first and bat later.”

“ANYTHING! ANYWAY, REMEMBER THIS! I WON'T LOSE TO YOU GUYS!!”

Leaving those words behind, Nakabayashi-san took forceful steps as she returned back to class E's rest area.

“Nice going, Akihisa. That taunt just now was good.”

“What do you mean 'nice going'? Because of Yuuji, she already has a huge bad impression of me! How do you intend to compensate me!”

“Don't mind, Akihisa. If you are willing to work hard, the difference between humans can be patched up, dreams of different magnitudes can be fulfilled, and we can get back those A-books of ours.”

“Hearing you say it like that, the last sentence had the most impact!”

Sigh, but it's true that the A books are important.

“It seems like a quarrel happened. Are you two alright?”

“We're okay. Or rather, things went as I expected. Can't be better.”

“For me, it's really bad...”

What should I say? The mental trauma's too great.

“Sigh...if that's the case, another person thinks that I'm a weirdo...”

I always tried to live under the hood, and yet the society's approval of me seemed to go downhill. That's too illogical.

After sighing for a bit, I guess it was time to call out the summoned beasts. The first inning of this match will be refereed by Mukai-sensei. Seems like we're competing using Ancient Literature.

“Here I go, summon!”

After saying those words out, some little arrays appeared beside my foot. Then, a little figure that had my appearance appeared on it. The summoned beast that normally wore a student uniform and had a wooden sword is...

“So it got baseball clothing. Actually adjusting the system for this tournament, the principal sure is hardworking on some weird aspects.”

My summoned beast looked rather cute with the baseball bat and glove in hand.

“It seems like they automated some aspects of the controls to help this baseball tournament flow smoothly.”

Well, that's right, or else we can't play baseball.

Looking at how the summoning system used to work, even though everyone wanted to wait for a ball, no one would be able to throw the ball accurately. It's good that the principal managed to think of it.

“As for the problems with the system, I guess it's pointless to think too much about it. Right now, the most important thing is that we should focus and get ready for the match.”

“Hideyoshi's right. No matter the circumstances or what, anyway, this is a good chance to get back our confiscated items.”

Though Yuuji said that, he hadn't mentioned anything about the brilliant plan.

“Okay, I'll announce the defensive lineup and batting order. Oi, everyone, listen up!”

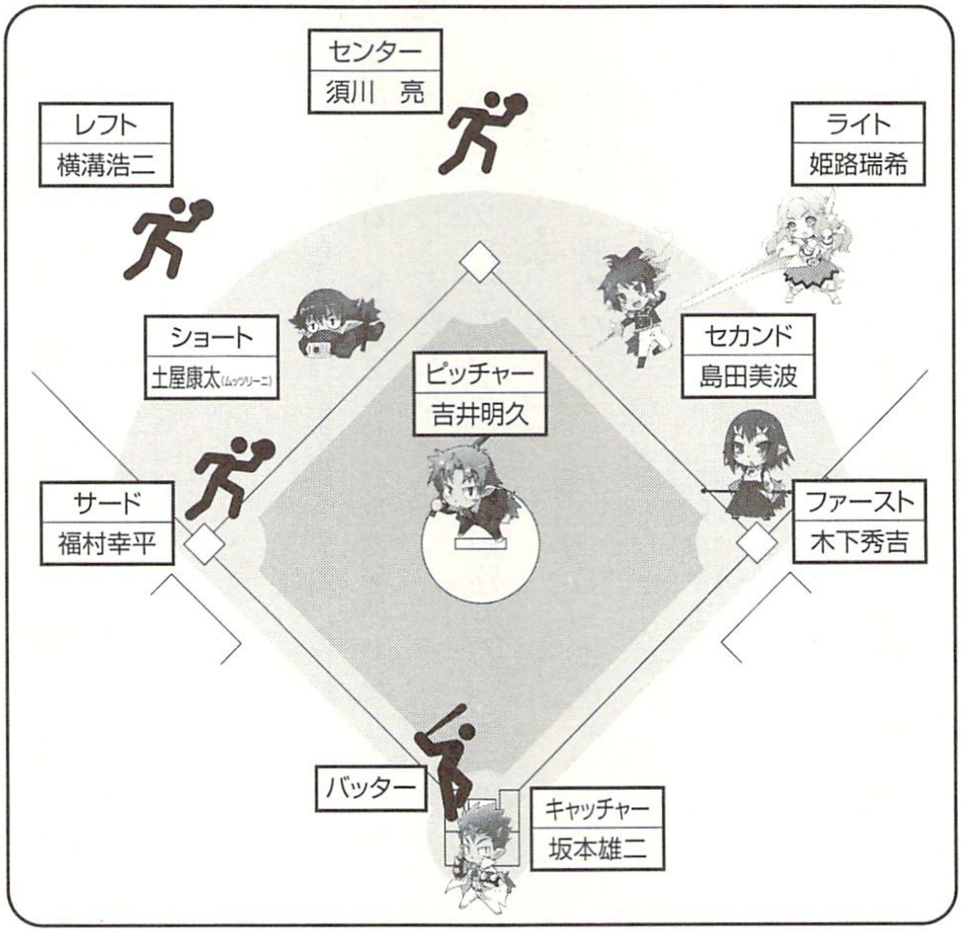
Yuuji raised his voice to the other classmates who were ready to take part in the baseball tournament. Every time that happened, it meant that Yuuji had something planned out, so there was no need to worry. That is why everyone would gather and listen to Yuuji.

“Basically, this will be the defensive lineup and batting order.”

1. First batter: 1st baseman Kinoshita Hideyoshi
2. Second batter: Shortstop Tsuchiya Kouta (Muttsurini)
3. Third batter: Pitcher Yoshii Akihisa
4. Fourth batter: Catcher Sakamoto Yuuji
5. Fifth batter: Right fielder Himeji Mizuki
6. Sixth batter: 2nd baseman Shimada Minami
7. Seventh batter: Center fielder Sugawa Ryo
8. Eighth batter: 3rd baseman Fukumura Kohei
9. Ninth batter: Left fielder Yokomizo Koji

Bench players: Kimishima Hiroshi and Kondou Yoshimune.

一回戦　2−E戦　Fクラス　スターティングメンバー


センター
須川　亮
レフト
横溝浩二
ライト
姫路瑞希
ショート
土屋康太（ムッツリーニ）
セカンド
島田美波
ピッチャー
吉井明久
サード
福村幸平
ファースト
木下秀吉
バッター
キャッチャー
坂本雄二

打順	1番	2番	3番	4番	5番	6番	7番	8番	9番
	木下秀吉	土屋康太（ムッツリーニ）	吉井明久	坂本雄二	姫路瑞希	島田美波	須川　亮	福村幸平	横溝浩二

ベンチ	補欠
	近藤吉宗
	君島　博

システム管理者：藤堂カヲル

So I'm the 3rd batter and the pitcher? That feels like a nice position...

“But Yuuji, is it alright that I be the pitcher? Wouldn't you or Himeji-san be more suited?”

If we are to battle using summoned beasts, the ones with the highest scores in our class, Himeji-san or Yuuji should be the pitcher, since wouldn't that make it more difficult for the opponent to bat? And if I'm placed in the outfield, my points may be too low to throw the ball back in time. I think it should be alright if I defend the infield.

“If I could, I really wanted to do that.”

On hearing my question, Yuuji just smiled bitterly.

“If you could? What do you mean by that?”

“If Himeji or I are to pitch, which catcher do you think can catch the ball?”

Hearing him say that, I start to imagine the situation.

Uu. Now that he mentioned it, it's true...

“Oh ya, since the summoned beasts aren't like an ordinary human body, and that it has 10 times or more strength than that of a human...”

“That's the case. Though it's a relatively minor issue, it's like how we can't touch the summoned beasts, so we can't touch the ball as well, but there will still be weight. And considering that the ball is to be used by the summoned beasts, I guess that old granny would increase the points of the ball.”

“I, I see...”

Hearing Yuuji say that, I was a little shocked, but I felt that I could understand it. Even if the summoned beasts' strength are of our points, they're still several times stronger than a human. Just with class F's abilities alone, we are already able to throw with such force, let alone the students of class A.

“If that's the case, it can't be helped. If someone like Himeji or Yuuji is pitching, I don't think anyone in our class can catch the ball.”

Of course, it's not that we can't catch their pitches with the gloves...but if there's an accident, like being hit on the body or something, it seems that I can fly off into the Heavens.

“Then, can't Himeji pitch and Yuuji catch?”

Hideyoshi raised his hand and asked, but before Yuuji could answer, Himeji-san already answered first.

“I, I'm sorry, but I don't understand baseball at all...in fact, I have never played it before...”

“That's the case. We'll consider everything else later, but right now, I need to let Himeji understand the rules of baseball in the first round, which is why I left her at right fielder. However, looking at the scenarios in the future, I may need to do some defensive realignments.”

Forget about those guys on the baseball club, in a tournament of baseball that's held with summoned bests, I think it's not easy to hit the ball to either left or right, right? Besides, when the ball is hit out, it will be harder to hit to right field, and the infield situation is rather messy, since it would be harder for people who are not used to playing there, so Yuuji's judgment should be correct.

“This is all I have to say. Any questions?”

Yuuji looked around at everyone. It seemed that nobody had any questions.

Thus, all of us naturally formed a circle around Yuuji, and Yuuji shouted to encourage everyone present.

“Okay, let's go—ARE YOU GUYS READY!!?”

“OOSSUU!!”

“SO WHAT ABOUT E CLASS? THEY'RE JUST A STEPPING STONE!! WE CAN'T POSSIBLY LOSE!!”

“OOSSUU!!”

“OUR AIM IS TO ADVANCE TO THE FINALS AND TAKE REVENGE ON THE TEACHERS!!! OUR GREATEST AIM IS TO KILL THEM OFF, GET THEIR SCALPS AND OFFER THEM TO OUR FALLEN COMRADES' (A-books) GRAVES!!”

“WWWWWWOOOOOOHHHH!!”

“EVERYONE, THE TIME HAS COME!! THIS WILL BE A WAR FOR OUR IRREPLACEABLE FRIENDS (A-books)!!!”

“““LEAVE IT TO US!!!”””

The guys' eyes were burning with passion. Those enemies of ours who took away our friends without remorse—the teachers' team led by Ironman will suffer DIVINE PUNISHMENT!! WATCH AND LEARN, YOU TEAM OF DEMONIC TEACHERS!!!”

“Well, about that, Minami-chan...things have developed like that. It feels like...”

“Yeah...it's like we got those kinds of books confiscated from us...”

“I didn't bring any A-books to school...”

Our class F was finally united. Because we must remain united and beat those classes above us!!

☆

“PLAY BALL!!”

Mukai-sensei, who was acting as the umpire, shouted as the voice echoed throughout the sports arena, and with that, the match officially began. The real match is played with summoned beasts, so it doesn't matter where we stand...but for easy control, everyone's standing behind their summoned beasts, so it's basically not much different from being on the field ourselves.

“Let's have a nice game! Summon!”

The first batter of class E said hello as he stepped into the batting box. The defensive side isn't required to stand at a particular place, but the batter has to remain in the batter box. It seems that it's to prevent the batter from seeing the defensive signals and the location of the glove.

Ancient Literature

Class E, Sonomura Toshiya, 117 points

vs

Class F, Yoshii Akihisa, 71 points.

The subjects tested for every inning were, Ancient Literature for the 1st inning, Maths for the 2nd inning, Chemistry for the 3rd, English for the 4th and Health Education for the 5th. So right now, it was a battle of Ancient Literature.

My summoned beast was holding the ball in its hand, waiting for the catcher's signal. As the breaking ball can't be used, Yuuji can only indicate the trajectory and the speed. Let me see, the first ball. Yuuji's summoned beast is putting its hands at—the middle!?

(Can I really throw it right down the middle!?)

I used my eyes to ask Yuuji, who was behind the catcher summoned beast. This would be the common way we would communicate with each other, as Yuuji answered me in the same manner.

(No problem. This is the first ball, and the opponent isn't used to controlling the summoned beast. I just want to test out the opponent.)

(Okay, I see.)

On getting Yuuji's reply, I understood that he wanted me to throw a strike down the middle. Considering that we have to taunt the opponents, let's throw a slow ball. Since I have to throw a strike, it's best for me to preserve my energy.

(I'm pitching, Yuuji.)

(Okay, bring it on!)

I just need to follow the trajectory Yuuji pointed out and throw the ball. Ready...

KLANG!!

“HOMERUN!!!”

“THROW THAT DAMNED BALL BETTER, YOU IDIOT!!!”

“I SHOULD BE THE ONE SCOLDING YOU! GIVE BETTER DIRECTIONS, YOU SCUM!!!”

The ball let out a sharp sound and disappeared behind the blue sky.

That damned Yuuji, that was basically what I just said.

“You two...no matter what, throwing a slow bulls-eye down at a club member was really dumb...”

The first pitch was sent flying for a homerun, and we immediately fell behind, 0-1.

“Let's have a good game! Summon!”

With no one out and no baserunners, the 2nd batter was already standing in the batter's box. I received the ball and exchanged looks with Yuuji.

(Akihisa, you bastard! If you mess up next time, I'll stuff that bat up your butt!)

(Right back at you, Yuuji! If you make another mistake, I'll break your leg bones with the bat!)

After confirming the signal through eye contact, I launched the first pitch to the 2nd batter.

KLANG!

“HOMERUN!”

““GIVE ME THAT BAT!!!””

Yuuji and I immediately ran to the rest area and sounded out our request. We lost points again! This damned bastard...how useless is he!? This is stupid!!

“I CAN'T STAND YOU TWO IDIOTS!! WE CAN'T LEAVE THIS TO YOU TWO!!!”

“ACTUALLY TRUSTING IN THOSE TWO IDIOTS YOSHII AND SAKAMOTO!! WE'RE THE BIG IDIOTS!!!”

“IF THAT'S THE CASE, I'LL PITCH! YOSHII, SUB!”

“I'LL CATCH THEN! SAKAMOTO, SUB!!”

—KLANG!!

“Class E 3-0 Class F”

“...Arr, suddenly a large crisis...”

“No no no, this isn't a crisis anymore. Only one side is getting the points...”

Even if the pitcher and catcher were changed, the opponent still hit a homerun off us. Right now, the score is 0-3. Those class E bastards, to think that they're rather impressive.

We asked the umpire for a timeout at the pitcher's mound. At that moment, Himeji-san, who was guarding the outfield came running over in small steps.

“Well, Akihisa-kun...”

“Hm? What's wrong, Himeji-san?”

“Is it really alright to change pitchers like that?”

“Mn, it's alright as long as we're not changing with bench players.”

There're a lot of rules in real baseball, but the summoned beast baseball tournament doesn't seem to have too many restrictions. However, if we're overboard with our efforts, some people may have issues with regards to this.

"Anyway, let's regroup. Akihisa will still be the pitcher, and we have to attack cautiously. Akihisa, you better throw the ball better this time."

“Mn, got it.”

After deciding the plan, we all return back to our defensive positions. I'm the pitcher again...got to pitch seriously this time.

After returning back to the pitcher's mound, I wait for the batter to get ready. Now, I'm facing the 4th batter, which means--

“Yoshii Akihisa, you actually called me muscular...I, I definitely won't forgive you!”

So as expected, it's Nakabayashi-san from class E. As expected from the 4th batter, she has amazing presence.

(Akihisa, it's the 4th batter now. Just pitch with all you got.)

I nod my head to respond to Yuuji's eye signal. I'm not so stupid to mess up here.

Trying to hold down the nervous feeling in my chest, I sigh deeply and get ready to pitch.

DONK!

“HIT BY PITCH. BATTER WALKS.”

“LET ME BEAT HIM UP! JUST ONCE, JUST LET ME BEAT HIM UP!!”

“Calm down, Nakabayshi! We have the upper hand now. Wouldn't our efforts be futile if you make the match invalid because you were too much?"

The guys in class E are trying desperately to calm the raging Nakabayashi-san.

I used too much force and missed...would Nakabayashi-san be willing to forgive me if I immediately take off my cap to apologize to her?

Even though I'm feeling despair with regards to the relationship with the neighboring class rep, the match still continues. Baserunner on 1st, and nobody out. It's now the 5th batter.

(Alright, no time for games. Pitch seriously now.)

(I was being serious since the beginning...)

I sighed, and pitched the ball to where Yuuji's glove is. Maybe the batter felt pressurized as there were consecutive homeruns before, as the batter in the batter box frantically swings at a fly ball that falls in front of the second base and sends him out. With that, we finally got our first out.

(Good, good, very good. Now, pitch here.)

Yuuji readies his glove. I missed and hit Nakabayashi-san, but right now, I'm getting used to the rhythm of the game, so there shouldn't be any problems now.

“STRIKE! BATTER OUT! SWITCHOVER!”

Next, the 6th and 7th batters were out, so now it's finally time to switch sides. This time, we'll be batting.

“Alright! There was a little miscommunication, but it's basically still within my plan! Let's hurry up and get the points back and kill off class E!”

““““YOOOOSSSSHHHH!!!””””

Speaking of which, our class's normally disorganized. It's only when we're attacking that we can finally fulfill our abilities.

“Our first batter will be Hideyoshi. It's up to you.”

“Leave it to me.”

After saying that, Hideyoshi turns and walks to the batter box. Do your best, Hideyoshi!

“Kinoshita, I'll immediately crush you and use this momentum to get all the way to the finals!”

Standing on the pitcher's mound is Nakabayashi-san, who's acting as pitcher. She's burning with passion all over. Being the class rep of the class full of people in clubs, her attitude right now is basically what I would expect.

After confirming that Hideyoshi entered the batter's box, Nakabayashi-san starts to pitch. Hideyoshi stares carefully at the ball that flew here, and just lets the first ball fly past.

“BALL!”

The umpire shouted out 'ball' really loudly. The catcher throws the ball back to the pitcher, and the 2nds ball is thrown.

“BALL!”

The second ball never landed in the strike zone cleanly as well. Nakabayashi-san looks somewhat troubled as she receives the ball, and gets into position cautiously before throwing the next pitch.

“STRIKE!”

This time, it finally entered the umpire's strikezone. It seem that Nakabayashi-san was unable to pitch well because she couldn't decide on the pitch as it made her look anxious.

As the match continued, it's now 2 balls and 2 strikes. As Nakabayashi-san starts to pitch again, Hideyoshi, who hasn't been moving up till now, finally takes action.

“FOUL BALL!”

Hideyoshi seems like he's deliberately not swinging with full force as the bat grazes the ball. This is what they call 'cut', right?

“Oi, Yuuji, that swing Hideyoshi just did...”

“Yeah, he's most likely trying to get base on balls.”

This is a baseball tournament that's played with summoned beasts instead of being there themselves, but the basic rules of baseball hasn't changed. If the opponent throws 3 strikes, it'll be a strikeout. But if the opponent throws 4 balls, the batter can walk on to first base. However, it seems that the umpire isn't too stringent on pitching fouls.

“FOUL BALL!”

He used the same method to hit the next ball. This method can lure the opponent to throw a large amount of pitches, it can also cause psychological burden on the pitcher. Already unused to controlling summoned beasts in this tournament, the 1st batter's already being so tough to handle. I guess the opponent must find it tough, right?

“BALL!”

And another ball. Now it's 3 balls and 2 strikes.

“Damn you...KINOSHITA, YOU'RE BEING TOO DESPICABLE!”

Being on the pitcher's mound, Nakabayashi-san's gritting her teeth in anger. Right now, in this world that so emphasizes on winning and losing, this is a common tactic, but Nakabayashi-san doesn't seem like she would forgive him.

“SWING HARD, KINOSHITA! IT'S TIME TO SETTLE THIS!”

“Sorry, but I can't oblige. We're now 0-3 down, and this match only has 5 innings. We must get points from you.”

Due to time constraints, this baseball tournament matches are only 5 innings long. As the attacking side, Hideyoshi's judgement is correct.

“WHAT! ARE YOU AFRAID OF ME? FORGET ABOUT BASE ON BALLS AND SWING A BASE HIT!”

“It's useless no matter how you taunt me. I just want to do my part.”

“DAMN YOU! STOP SAYING TO MUCH AND PLAY—CAN'T YOU BE MORE LIKE A MAN!”

“...You say that you want me to be more like a man?”

“--STRIKE! BATTER OUT!”

“Sorry everyone. I can't do it.”

“No worries, this can't be helped...but why did you swing so hard at the last minute?”

“Don't mind, it's just that I won't back away with regards to certain things.”

“Eh? Uu...”

I don't really understand, but anyway, Hideyoshi got forced out. Right now, the second batter's Muttsurini. This guy's pretty good at sports, and is very used to controlling summoned beasts. He probably won't let us down.

Ancient Literature, Class E, Nakabayashi Hiromi, 105 points.

Vs

Ancient Literature, Class F, Tsuchiya Kouta, 22 points.

“What do we do now, Yuuji? I feel that Muttsurini will die really badly!”

“That's a coincidence for once, Akihisa, I feel this way as well.”

Even if he can hit the ball, with the unique difference in scores, he can't possibly hit the ball far, right?

“But Akihisa, you don't have to worry too much.”

“No, even if you ask me not to worry...”

Is there a way we can think of?

“WE MUST BELIEVE! IF WE BELIEVE, EVEN THE YOUKAIS WILL STAND ON OUR SIDE!”

“AH, NOW WE CAN ONLY PRAY TO THE GODS!”

And we're doing this in such a ridiculous manner.

“Please, killer youkais...”

“Watch out! That guy's using the name of evil spirits!!”

If the prayer really comes true, maybe the evil god would ask for a sacrifice from us?

“OUT!”

As we're talking about this useless thing, Muttsurini hit a rolling ball to the batter and got struck out. Now, it's 2 men out. Next, it's the 3rd batter—ahh, time for me to take the bat.

“Alright, I'll hit a big one!”

“Oh! Akihisa, we'll leave it to you then!”

“Leave it to me!”

Thomp thomp! I beat my chest as I enter the batter's box. No problems. I'll do well!

DONK!!!

“--Hit by Pitch, batter walks.”

'IT HURTS! IT HURTS! MY ORGANS GOT RUPTURED!! OUUUCCCHHHH!!”

The first ball was a hit by pitch on the face. The impact of the ball that hit my summoned beast's face was transferred onto my body. You don't have to go that far!

Facing me, who's rolling on the floor in pain, Nakabayashi-san, who's standing on the pitcher's mound, says seriously,

“FROM THIS MOMENT ON, AS LONG AS YOU'RE THE ONE BATTING, I'LL THROW THE BALL AT YOUR BODY!”

“THAT'S A LOUSY DECLARATION! YOU'RE HATING ME FOR WHAT HAPPENED JUST NOW, RIGHT!?”

Can someone replace me for my next bat?

I drag my body that's in pain to 1st base, Uu...that was just a misunderstanding...

“Alright, now the real powerhouse is here.”

Now, it'll be the 4th batter Yuuji.

Ancient Literature, Class E, Nakabayashi Hiromi, 105 points.

Vs

Ancient Literature, Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, 196 points.

Like usual, both their scores are displayed to everyone.

Yuuji's scores are so high, has great control over his summoned beast, and he's pretty athletic, so there shouldn't be any problems. Facing off against the opponent from class E, he should be able to take one down.

“Ugh...that's guy's terrifying, but the next batter is 'that' Himeji...better settle it here.”

Nakabayashi-san glared at Yuuji's score and muttered.

If the next batter after Yuuji is just a little prick, maybe Nakabayashi-san would deliberately throw a Base on Balls to avoid the confrontation, but unfortunately, behind Yuuji is the second in our year, Himeji-san. Of course, she doesn't want to deal with Himeji-san when there are baserunners on, so she chose to face off against Yuuji.

“Class F's rep, I'm going!”

With 2 men out and 1 baserunner on, Nakabayashi-san gets ready and pitches the 1st ball at Yuuji. The white ball flies straight at the glove--

“HA!”

KLANG—the sharp sound echoed, and the white ball flew into the air. There's no need to see where it went, this is a real homerun.

Class E 3-2 F Class

Yuuji and I return back to home plate, and we got 2 points. Now we're just 1 point behind class E.

“Damn it...it seems that I need to deal with Sakamoto through hit by pitch...”

““JUST USE A NORMAL BASE ON BALLS!!!””

Yuuji and I shouted out at Nakabayashi-san. We thought that she was a normal girl. Only after we started playing against each other that we realized that Nakabayashi-san's really weird somewhere.

“It's been tough on you, Sakamoto.”

“...That was a nice hit.”

“Good one, Yuuji.”

Once we returned back to the bench, everyone received Yuuji warmly. Isn't anyone concerned about me being hit by the ball?

“Alright, it's time for Himeji to go up. The way I see it, let's use this chance to hit another homerun and even the score.”

“Uu...that's a bit hard for Mizuki, right? Her grades are good, but she's not really good at sports.”

Minami gave a wry smile. Himeji-san's body is already extremely weak, and she doesn't really get the chance to play sports, so this can't be helped.

“I thought that way as well, so I told Himeji just now that she doesn't need to swing the bat.”

“In other words...you want Himeji-san to get Base on Balls?”

“That's right, besides, Himeji's marks can't be underestimated. It's okay if the bases are loaded, but when nobody's on base, I think the opponent won't want to fight it out.”

That's right. Besides Yuuji and Himeji-san, everyone here is of class F level, so with nobody on base, it's best to let her walk and fight it out against someone else.

“Base on balls, batter walks.”

“Ah, okay, thank you very much.”

While we're talking, Himeji-san got base on balls. Right now, it's 2 men out, a baserunner on 1st base, and the next batter is--

“Uu...it's me...”

The 6th batter is Minami, but it seems that she doesn't look confident...

“Eh? Minami, you don't know how to play baseball?”

Minami's pretty good at sports.

“Ah, it's not that I don't know how to play it. It's just that...”

“?”

Minami sighed and walked towards the batter box in a lonely manner. What's wrong?

Ancient Literature, Class E, Nakabayashi Hiromi, 105 points.

Vs

Ancient Literature, Class F, Shimada Minami, 6 points.

“ALRIGHT, EVERYONE, TIME TO DEFEND! WE HAVE TO DEFEND WELL!!”

““““WOOOHHH!!!””””

“I HAVEN'T EVEN BATTED YET!”

Minami's shout is ever so hollow. In the blink of an eye, she hit a rolling ball to the 3rd baseman and was immediately thrown out.

Sigh, too bad that the subject for this inning is Ancient Literature. Minami's not good with this subject at all, so this can't be helped.

Anyway, this series of offense is over. After the switch in sides, the 2nd inning is carried out through maths. Alright, time for me to--

“Hold it, Akihisa. You're not the pitcher in this inning.”

“Eh? Not me?”

Just when I was about to step up on the mound, Yuuji suddenly called me to stop me. Now what?

“This round will be conducted with maths. Shimada will be the pitcher.”

“Maths...ah, I see.”

Maths is one of the rare few subjects that Minami's good in, and Yuuji's rather good in maths too, so he should be able to catch Minami's pitches. Looking at this inning, they should be at around class B's level.

“That's the case, Aki, leave this inning to me. I'll do my best to hold them off.”

Minami patted me on my shoulder and I said,

“Mn, then I'll leave it to you then, Minami.”

“Okay, leave it to me.”

PA! Minami and I exchange high fives as I walk off the pitcher's mound. Minami's been through the baptism of the summoning battles and the summoning tournament, and she's already outstanding at sports, so I can leave the pitcher mound to her. If that's the case, I'll defend the second base Minami was defending.

Just when I was thinking this as I walked down the pitcher's mound, I find Himeji-san walking towards where I'm defending as well, staring at me for some reason.

“Hm? Himeji-san, is there something?”

“Ah, yes, that...”

Himeji-san came running over with small steps. What's wrong?

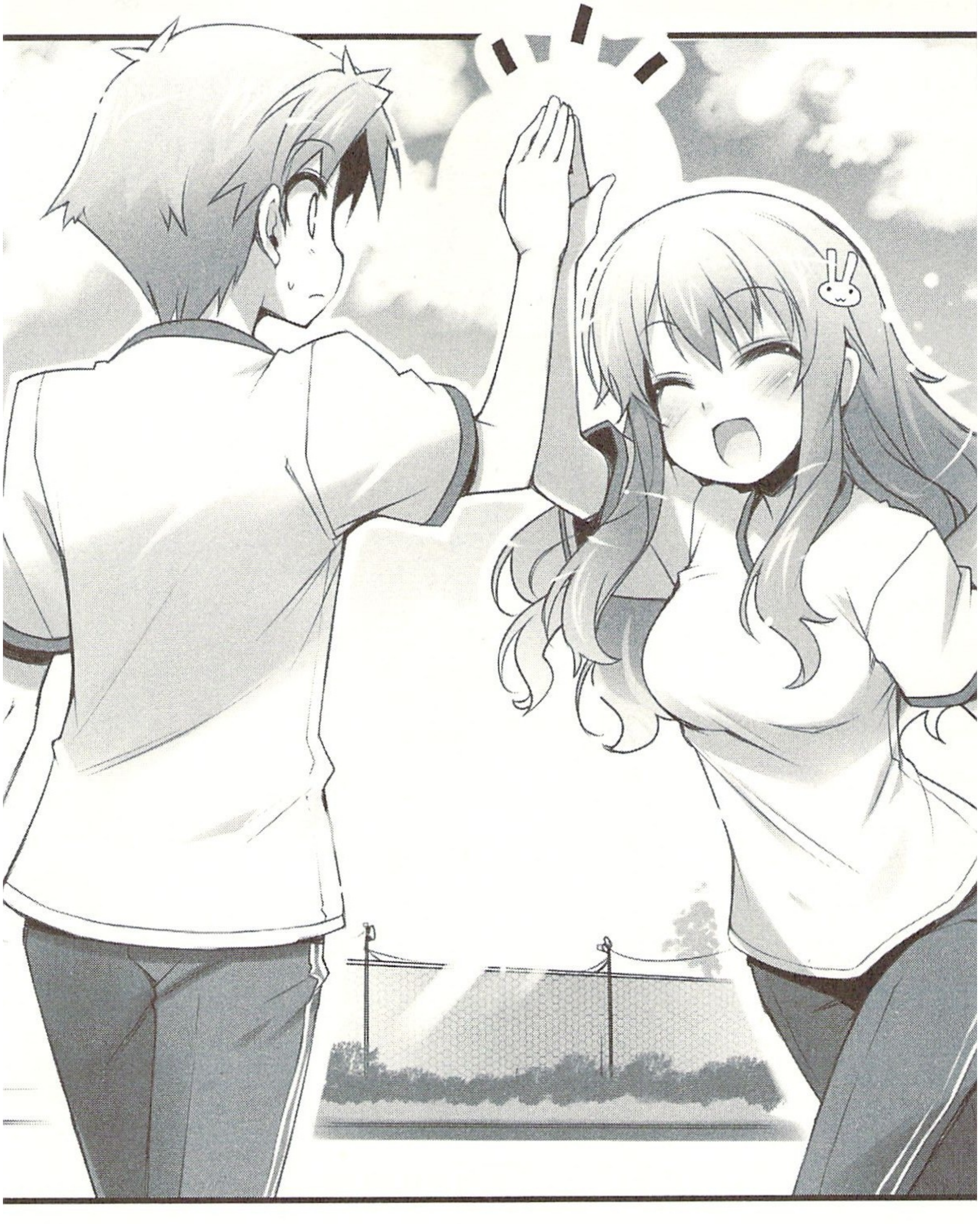
While we talking, Himeji-san raises her hand like she's hailing for a taxi. Eh, so I just need to copy her action?

“Like, like this?”

I followed what she did and raised my hand. Himeji-san immediately revealed a radiant smile--

“Yes!”

Pa, she high-fived with me.



“Let's do our best, Akihisa-kun.”

“Ah, mn, let's do our best, Himeji-san.”

“Okay!”

Himeji-san is smiling as she ran off to the outfield. I don't know what's going on, but she wants to encourage me by clapping hands together? So she's feeling the same as us?

Is that so? Then Himeji-san...

“She really wants to see our precious A-books...”

That's bad. These aren't things that girls should read.

“...What's going on? I feel that there's a severe misunderstanding here...”

Alright, time to wake up and defend. With class E as our opponents and Minami maths marks, they most probably won't be able to perform too well. The ball can't possibly fly into the outfield, right? In other words, I'm more important as an infielder now.

Mathematics, Class E, Oumura Shintarou, 65 points

Vs

Mathematics, Class F, Shimada Minami, 193 points.

The huge difference in points can be expected, the opponent's the 8th batter, so there shouldn't be any problems.

After the 1st and 2nd pitches, the chemistry between the pitcher and catcher makes us not worry for them. But Yuuji missed the 3rd ball, and it landed in his chest. The pitch Minami threw with such a high score was extremely fast, so missing it is to be expected.

Mathematics, Class F, Shimada Minami, 193 points.

&

Mathematics, Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, 175 points.

Minami and Yuuji's marks are shown in front of us. Up till now, Yuuji's marks have been hovering around the 200 mark, so that slip up caused him to lose 25 points. If even Yuuji's summoned beast can suffer such damage even with those kind of marks, I think it will be bad if it's anyone else, right? If I'm the one catching, the pain would even end up on me, so I have to avoid being the catcher no matter what.

While I'm thinking about this, the match is still ongoing. After that, Yuuji slipped up on another ball, but both of them managed to hold off the 3 batters. Minami's maths is really strong.

“It's been tough on you, Minami. Nice pitching.”

“Thanks, Aki.”

“Your pitching was strong, amazing.”

“Fufu, that was because I didn't managed to do well during batting just now. Of course I have to compensate through defense.”

Minami blinked one eye as she said that to me. Uu, it's cool when she does it--

“ONEE-SAMA! ONEE-SAMA'S THE BEST! SEEING ONEE-SAMA LIKE THIS, MIHARU...MIHARU HAS ALREADY...”

A certain girl from class D was shouting and cheering from the stands.

--Wouldn't girls fall for Minami if she does this?

“It'll be our offense now.”

“It's the 7th batter now, so Sugawa starts.”

“Osu! I'll hit that ball high and far!”

After saying that, Sugawa-san storms towards the batter box with mojo. Unfortunately, he knocked a high fly ball and got tagged out. Though the next batter Fukumura-san managed to get a base hit, Yokomizo-san and Hideyoshi didn't perform, and we ended the 2nd inning without earning a point.

3rd inning, 4th inning. Both us and class E didn't manage to get a point.

It's now the final inning. The subject for this round should be Health Education, so--

“Muttsurini, we'll leave pitching to you then.”

“...Got it.”

Speaking of health education, this will be the guy we first think of. This guy has points that surpasses a health education teacher, and it's now time for him to perform. If this guy's to throw the ball, I don't think anyone can hit it.

“No no, hold on. Muttsulini will be the catcher in this round. I'll be the pitcher.”

But Yuuji dampened my mood.

“Eh? Yuuji's going to be the pitcher? Why?”

Yuuji's health education marks shouldn't be lousy as well, but it's a whole lot less as compared to Muttsurini's. We're only behind by one, so shouldn't Muttsurini be pitching?

“I say...didn't I say it just now? If Muttsurini's to pitch with all he got when Health Education's the subject, the catcher will die if he's hit.”

That's right. It was a similar situation when Minami was on the board.

“That's true...but you just need to catch the ball well. Wouldn't there be no damage if you catch the ball in the glove?”

“In other words, I'll die if I miss one!”

On a side note, the summoned beast that's acting as the catcher in this tournament doesn't have any defensive equipment. In this situation, if Yuuji's hit directly by Muttsurini on the body, even Yuuji's summoned beast will suffer severely.

“Really, Yuuji...you're so spineless. If you're a man, you should bet your life and finish the match.”

“I see, so I'll let you be the catcher and show off your manly side.”

“I'm sorry, I'm really sorry.”

It'll be a joke if my summoned beast is to catch that ball with such low marks. Even if I can catch it well, the damage on me will be tremendous.

“What's wrong, Akihisa? Aren't you good at controlling your summoned beast? Forget about the score difference, I think you should be able to catch Muttsurini's pitches.”

“No, it's not that easy no matter how you say it.”

Having just seen the power of Minami's pitch when it was about 200. The speed was already terrifying. Compared to that, it'll be easier to hit against a pitch that's flying at 130 km/hr. Even if we can't pitch curveballs, it'll be too terrifying to throw pitches with that kind of speed with just summoned beasts. Besides, if the pitch hits me while I'm the catcher, the pain the summoned beast takes will be inflicted on me. This will be way too risky. Even if I'm really used to controlling the summoned beast, I can't take such huge responsibility.

“Besides, the opponent's class E, so I can still hold them off if I pitch. More than defense, right now, we need to worry more about offense. Remember, we're still 1 point behind.”

After Yuuji said that, he turns to walk towards the pitcher's mound. He's right. Even if we can hold off the opponents, we'll lose if we can't score. More important than the defense now is that we have to find a way to score in the bottom half of the inning.

Health Education, Class E, Yumata Hirofumi, 52 points

Vs

Health Education, Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, 147 points.

The scores of the pitcher and the batter are out. As Yuuji said, there won't be any problems with such a difference in score.

“STRIKE! BATTER OUT! SWITCHOVER!”

In the blink of an eyes, Yuuji already struck all three out, and it's now the bottom half of the inning. Though Muttsurini missed the catches twice, health education's his speciality, so he didn't suffer that much damage, and we managed to end this inning safely.

“Alright, time for us to make a comeback! Who's starting?”

“Me, I guess.”

We've been through exactly 2 rounds of batting, so now it's Hideyoshi up as the 1st batter again. Okay, we're settling this in this round.

“Please, Hideyoshi, you must hit the ball out.”

“There'll be no problems if it's Hideyoshi. Do your best.”

“...I'm looking forward to it.”

“Kinoshita, no matter what, you must hit the ball out!”

“Show them what you're made of Kinoshita! All hope is on you!”

“That's right! Do your best! And try to hit the ball out!”

“U, uu, I'll try to hit—”

“““THIS IS FOR THE SAKE OF OUR A-BOOKS!!!”””

“...”

“STRIKEOUT!”

“What's wrong, Hideyoshi? You didn't swing hard at all!”

“Those encouraging words of yours drained strength from me...”

For some reason, Hideyoshi looked really tired. That's weird, even if Hideyoshi's summoned beast is tired or hurt or what, it shouldn't bounce back onto Hideyoshi himself.

“Alright, everyone, don't be disheartened. Muttsurini's next. There will be something good!”

Yuuji said this, seemingly to encourage everyone. That's right, sending Muttsurini in health education, we're really looking forward to it.

“...I'm going up.”

Muttsurini walks into the batter box. His score is--

Health Education, Class E, Furukawa Ayumi, 102 points

Vs

Health Education, Class F, Tsuchiya Kouta, 589 points.

Such a shocking difference. If he can hit the ball, Muttsurini would definitely hit a homerun.

“Tsuchiya-san's amazing. If that's the case, he can hit a homerun.”

“Mn. If he can, it should be a homerun.”

Standing beside me, Himeji-san clenches her fist and makes a little victory pose. It seems that she and I have the same thought. Unfortunately...

“However, I don't think it can happen. Tsuchiya won't be able to hit it.”

Minami said to break Himeji-san's wonderful imagination.

That's right. Muttsurini can't perform now.

“Eh? Why?”

Minami's words made Himeji-san, who still doesn't understand baseball too well, have all sorts of question marks on her face.

“Because there's too much of a difference between both of them. The way I see it, Muttsurini will be forced to walk.”

“Walk—ah, you mean that the opponent will throw a Base on Balls and let Tsuchiya-san on base?”

“Mn, that's the case.”

If they're to face off now, it'll be extremely likely that Muttsurini will hit a homerun. But if they send him on base, they won't lose points if it's just a baserunner. on. The opponent will win if they can keep this point, so they'll try and avoid facing off against Muttsurini.

“Base on Balls. Batter walks.”

“...(Nods head).”

As what we expected, Muttsurini got sent on base. In that case, we can't get a point now.

“The way I see it, class E's plan is to deal with Akihisa and send Yuuji and Himeji on base first before taking on Shimada.”

Seems like the opponent checked through our scores. Of course, they won't take on Yuuji or Himeji-san, but rather attack Minami. If that's the case, even if I bunt, I can only gift the opponent with an out...

“Oh yea, Akihisa, I don't know what's your score?”

“I remember my health ed score is around 23.”

“That's really pathetic.”

“Tha, that's because, because...my reference books (A-books) got confiscated...”

“WHAT WERE YOU READING ALL THIS TIME, IDIOT!”

With such a score, if there's no miracle, I can't possibly hit the ball into the outfield. But if I can get on base, I can get Yuuji or Himeji-san to get one back.

“Don't think too much, Akihisa. Just relax. It'll come to us.”

Though the situation is disadvantageous to us, Yuuji still looked rather casual.

“What do you mean? Have you thought of a plan?”

“No, I don't mean a plan or anything...stop saying so much. Get on board. If you don't get there, the umpire's going to be mad.”

“Ah, okay, I'm going then.”

“Akihisa-kun, do your best.”

“Thank you, Himeji-san.”

With Himeji-san seeing me off, I turn to walk to the batter box. Seeing Yuuji look so confident, I know he's planning something, but I don't know what it is. What does that Yuuji plan to do?

“Yoshii-kun, please hurry up.”

“Ah, okay. Sorry.”

The umpire's staring at me now, and I can only scamper to the designated batter box. Once my summoned beast got ready, the opponent confirms Muttsurini's position before getting into a pitching position.

“Oh ya, Sakamoto, Aki just asked. Is there a plan you prepared?”

“No—just look at the field. You'll understand, we won't lose this match.”

“Won't lose? But the situation's disadvantageous to us.”

“No, you're mistaken. The one in a disadvantage is them. Think, it's now the bottom half of the 5th inning, we're behind by one, and the subject's health education.”

“I know that. But Tsuchiya's already on base...”

“And on base—is that Muttsurini.”

“STEAL!”

A call can be heard from class E.

After confirming that the batter won't throw over to hold him at first base, Muttsurini dashes towards 2nd base. I see! So that's how it is!

The pitcher threw the pitch, and it flew to the catcher's glove. In order to help Muttsurini steal base, I try to swing as wildly as possible. If I can block the catcher's vision, I can increase Muttsurini chances of stealing base greatly.

“Damn it...”

After catching the ball, the catcher immediately throws the ball to second base. Damn it! At this moment, it'll be hard for Muttsurini to steal base--

“...Eh? Hard? That Muttsurini?”

Of course not! This is health education, Muttsurini's unbeatable! If the opponent's class A, it can still be talked off, but when the opponent's only at about 100 points, how can it be tough for Muttsurini?

As I say this--

The moment the catcher throws the ball towards second base, I seem to see a glint in Muttsurini's eyes.

“...Baited.”

Muttsurini's summoned beast suddenly accelerated. That guy was deliberately running slow!

“Fa, fast!”

Muttsurini's summoned beast steps onto 2nd base at a speed the human eye can't catch, and he didn't stop as he dashes towards 3rd base. At this point, the catcher just threw the ball to second base. Muttsurini slowed down to confuse them, causing the catcher to throw to second base and not third base! It's true that if Muttsurini did that, the catcher would have ignored second base and went straight for third base right from the beginning. That's a brilliant plan!

“THIRD BASE!”

“GOT IT!”

The catcher immediately gave the instruction, and the second baseman immediately throws the ball to third base. Will Muttsurini be tagged out?

It's also tough for him to get from second base to third base. Now, what will he...

“...Accelerate.”

At this moment, Muttsurini muttered that code word. This is a special activation command that only summoned beasts with more than 400 points can have. Muttsurini has this unique ability, and like what the term means—it can cause the summoned beast to increase speed.

“HOW IS IT POSSIBLE!?”

Class E just let out a cry of disbelief.

Muttsurini steps onto third base at a speed where only the afterimage is left behind, and the ball is still in mid-air.

“STOP MESSING AROUND!”

The third baseman finally catches the ball and throws the ball back to home plate. However--

“...Final acceleration.”

Muttsurini ran faster than the ball as he steps onto home plate, taking a point in an exciting fashion.

“““BRILLIANT!!!”””

Class F's bench erupted into roars. So now we're 3 all. We're tied!

“Alright! Let's get it back at one go!”

Getting ready for the next pitch, I let my summoned beast raise the bat and get into position. It should be alright if I can use the chance when the opponent's wavering due to what Muttsurini did--

DONK!

“HIT BY PITCH. BATTER WALKS!”

“Why...why is it that I always get hit by pitch...”

If you're affected by what Muttsurini did, just send me a base on balls!

Health Education, Class E, Furukawa Ayumi, 102 points

Vs

Health Education, Class F, Yoshii Akihisa, 0 points.

“Yoshii Akihisa, KIA!”

AKIHISA YOSHII

“Eh? Hold on! The match's still not over! What happens if my health ed drops to 0?”

Does this mean...

“Akihisa, go take the replenishment tests. I'll let Kondou be the pinch baserunner.”

“Damn it! Isn't this way of getting off too lousy!?”

Why is it that I have to take the tests in this rare sports meet? I feel that the summoning system's not right!

“Well, you don't have to worry about the match. As things stand, we'll definitely win.”

“Uu...that's too much...”

I drag my heavy steps to the staff room.

In the end, while I was taking my health education replenishment tests, class F was able to send class E home with a base hit. But for me, who's unable to take part in the match, I'm feeling really uninvolved...

The Fourth Question

Use mathematical induction[3] to prove the following:

$1 + 3 + 5 + \ldots + (2n-1)=n^2$ ①

When n is a natural number.

Himeji Mizuki's answer

1. When n=1, equation ① is calculated as,

Left Hand Side = 1
Right Hand Side = 1

2. Assuming that n=k is valid,

$1 + 3 + 5 + \ldots + (2k-1)=k^2$ ②

When n=k+1, the left hand side of ① is written as

$1 + 3 + 5 + \ldots + (2k-1)+(2k+1)$
$=k^2 + (2k+1)$ (Obtained from equation ①)
$=(k+1)^2$

In other words,

$1 + 3 + 5 + \ldots + (2k-1)+(2k+1)$
$=(k+1)^2$

① is valid when n=k+1.

From 1. and 2., equation ① is valid for all values on n.

Teacher's comment

That's correct. In mathematical induction, you need to prove that n=1 is valid. Also, when assuming that n=k is valid, you have to deduce that n=k+1 is valid. In this question, the key is that n is a natural number. On a side note, people often forget to put that n=1, so do take note when answering.

Tsuchiya Kouta's answer

"I'll prove here that ① is correct - Tsuchiya Kouta"

Teacher's comment

AKIHISA YOSHII

Even if you try to sneak through by writing it in a style of a thesis, it's useless. The question mentioned that you have to prove it through 'mathematical induction', so while assuming that n=k, please write the equation that n=k+1 is valid.

Yoshii Akihisa's answer

"My judgment can hold."

Teacher's comment

"Please use an assumption."

“Oh! Akihisa, you're back.”

“Been tough on you, Akihisa.”

“...Welcome back.”

“Ah, mn, I'm back...”

As I finish the replenishment tests and return to the middle of the sports arena, Hideyoshi and the rest kindly receive my arrival. Seeing them like this at least alleviates the feeling of being left behind a bit. But whether we won or lost, I still wished to see it through with everyone...

Thinking about this, my eyes turn to the class F rest area that's bounded by rope. At this moment, I realize that the guys in class are surrounding a strange box and arguing. What are they doing?

“PLEASE LET ME BE THE LUCKY GUY!”

“STOP YAPPING AND START DRAWING! THERE ARE PEOPLE BEHIND!”

“I GOT IT, I GOT IT! WHY ARE YOU GUYS SO ANXIOUS! ALRIGHT, IT'S THIS ONE—DAMN IIIIIITTTTT!!!”

“““NICE! CRY YOUR WAY HOME!!!”””

“Eh, what are they doing?”

I asked Yuuji who's beside me. Several classmates of mine seem to be dejected and unhappy. Why is that?

“Hm? You're talking about them? Just doing a lucky draw.”

“I know that. I just want to know why they're doing it.”

“Oh. The next event is the 2-people-3-legged race. The draw's to decide who goes with who.”

“Heh~so that's how it is.”

It's true that the choosing of partners in the 2-people-3-legged race is crucial. More than one's own ability, the most important thing is for both sides to be able to co-ordinate together.

“What's wrong, Akihisa? You're pretty calm.”

Hideyoshi asked me with a puzzled look, but there's no reason for me not to remain calm...

“Because it doesn't matter who's the partner. Guys and girls will be separated anyway--”

“This is a mixed event.”

“No problems at all. SUMMON!”

GO, MY SUMMONED BEAST! KILL THOSE GUYS FOR ME!!

“CALM DOWN, YOU IDIOT! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN SUMMON WITHOUT A TEACHER'S PERMISSION?”

“I CAN'T CALM DOWN AT ALLLL!! WHO IS IT? WHO'S THAT LUCKY GUY WHO GOT THE LUCKY NUMBER?”

“Relax, it's not decided yet.”

“Eh? Really?”

“...If that were the case, we wouldn't be quarreling like this.”

“Ah, you're right.”

Lucky...the key to winning the 2-people-3-legged race is to not get anxious and match the steps of the partner. The bodies will have to be together. If there's any traitor who would do such a great thing to the girls, that guy will be massacred by the FFF.

“I see. That's why everyone's praying.”

“That's the case.”

Everyone's praying before they stand in front of the box, putting their hands together and praying.

“But, to think that Himeji-san and Minami would agree to play the 2-people-3-legged race with the guys as well. Yuuji, did you say something to them?”

Looking over there, the other girls seem to be paired up with the same gender. Himeji-san and Minami probably did that because there are only 3 people, Himeji-san, Minami and Hideyoshi and can't leave someone out?

Hearing my words, Yuuji gives a 'really, you...' look.

“What idiotic words are you saying? I would wish for guys and girls to be in different groups.”

“Eh? Why—oh ya, I understand. You'll be killed if something goes wrong.”

“Good that you can understand.”

Once Kirishima-san knows that Yuuji's partner is a girl, no matter how far Yuuji is, she would install some counter measures. There's no such thing as 'impossible' in a girl-in-love's dictionary—everyone knows that.

“More than that, I feel that the baseball tournament's more important.”

“...I agree.”

Yuuji and Muttsurini nod their heads. These people have already turned into Asura just to get their confiscated A-books. They would prefer the more practical honor of getting back their A-books 10,000 times more than getting honor and glory.

“If that's the case, the next match is decided, right?”

The middle (first) sports arena is used to hold the sports meet, and the second arena that's located behind the school compound was used to hold our second-year baseball tournament.. The gym is opened for the 3rd years. We're facing the 3rd years later...

“...They haven't finished yet. It's extra innings.”

“Oh, if we're successful, we get a walk over.”

Due to the time limit, this match will be extended to 7 innings. If they can't win, the match will be decided as a tie. It sounds nice, but both sides can't progress on. If that's really the case, we can take the next match without playing.

“Anyway, let's check the next match to game plan...let me see, the next match has maths, biology, modern literature, economics and geography.”

Yuuji took out the schedule to check. These are all basic, normal subjects.

“...No health education.”

Muttsurini sounded rather lonely when he said that as he glanced at the schedule in Yuuji's hand. Like what Muttsurini says, there's no health education for every match.

“If that's the case, do you want to take part in the sports meet event, Muttsurini?”

“You're right. We'll do that for the second round.”

“...I got it.”

To think that Muttsurini would actually leave the frontlines. However, since there's no health education in the next few matches, it can't be helped. Besides, Muttsurini's other subjects are worse than me.

“Then we should readjust the batting order and the defensive alignments. The first one is maths, so Shimada will be the 1st batter...we'll let Sugawa handle the second. That guy seems like he can really bunt.”

“Then what about me? I can't handle maths.”

“You can't handle maths 'too'. Besides, even if we leave you at the back few batters, your biology scores are atrocious, so I might as well just leave you at 3rd. It's good if you can really bunt. If you're successful, we should be able to get 1 point.”

“Mn, got it.”

Yuuji decided our batting order and defensive positioning.

Just when Yuuji and I are discussing--

“Well, erm, Akihisa-kun...”

A voice called me from behind. This voice...Himeji-san?

“Hm? Himeji-san, what's wrong?”

Turning around, I see that Himeji-san and Minami are standing behind me. They're looking really serious. What's going on?

“It's not really something big...”

“Well...Akihisa-kun, what's your number?”

“Eh? You're asking me for my number...”

Ah, should be the batting order, right? As expected of Himeji-san, being so serious when she does things. She would actually check the defensive position and batting order. Though she's not really good at understanding sports, it seems like he's seriously thinking about this match.

Uu, my batting order...

“I'm 3. Number three.”

““WAH!!””

After I answered that, Himeji-san and Minami seem to whimper for some reason. Is my batting order weird?

“Uuu...I know the chances are slim, but I thought that it could be possible...”

“That's too much. This is too saddening...the one chance to stick on. This is a rare chance...”

Both of them are holding onto a little piece of paper each as they becried.

“AH~so you're talking about that. Don't worry, you two, Akihisa was just talking about the batting order. He hasn't drawn the number for the 2-persons-3-legged race.”

Yuuji said to them while sounding like he's lecturing them.

““Eh?””

Himeji-san and Minami, who were in a moment of melancholy just a second ago, lifted their heads up at the same time. Hm? Was the number they were talking about regarding the 2-persons-3-legged race?

“Oh ya. I forgot all about that. Got to take one number!”

Who can take it if those guys take the wonderful opportunity to be with the girls!?

“Ah, that...Akihisa-kun!”

“Wait, Aki!”

As I was about to go for the box of numbers, Himeji-san and Minami suddenly stopped me. Uu...if I don't hurry up, my happiness will be taken away.

“What? Is there something?”

“No. We...well...what should I say...I'm 7...”

“My number's 6...”

Himeji-san and Minami seem to say these numbers gingerly. 7 and 6? I see. So I'll strike jackpot if I get these numbers, right--

““(PLEASE) DON'T DRAW THIS NUMBER!””

Seems like they really hate me.

“I, I got it...then, I'll draw one number then...”

“I say, you two. Those words may have already caused Akihisa to misunderstand...”

“Be, because it's Akihisa-kun...if we say to him 'please draw this number'--”

“That, that's right! When that happens, it will become the opposite of what we wish for. For some reason, I keep feeling that he will get Sakamoto's number or something...”

“...Really, it's been tough on you two...”

Sigh, though I never had much luck, I can't possibly get a good draw anyway. But I'm really sad to be told them by them...I drag my heavy footsteps and arrive in front of Sugawa-san, who's watching over the box.

“Alright, Yoshii, draw your fate.”

“Uu, okay...”

With Sugawa-san staring at me mysterious, I reach my hand into the box. It'll be heaven if I can draw 6 or 7, so I have to do my best. Uu...okay, this one!

I immediately pull out the number. The number written on the paper is--

“Ah, 6...”

“KILL HIM!!!”

“““YES, HIEROPHANT!!!”””

“WHAT'S GOING ON? I GOT SURROUNDED!”

I haven't even said my number out loud, and a large group of people in black hoods surrounded me. I was careless! Saying out my number so openly like that, is it the end of me...

“6, 6...I see, so Aki will be with me...”

“Uu...Minami-chan looks so happy...”

“Do, do I? When do I look happy...”

“You liar! I can see your face glowing...”

“Uu...”

“I think Minami-chan will use this chance to touch Akihisa-kun's chest and butt...that's too sneaky...”

“Wh, what are you saying, Mizuki! How can I do such a thing—eh, what? What did you just say? Touching...Mizuki, what were you talking about...”

“Ah! No, nothing! I'm not talking about touching him sneakily. Th, that...I'm just talking about improving the relationship with Akihisa-kun. I just said it wrongly!”

“Mizuki..what were you planning to do to Aki...”

In a blink of an eye, I got wrestled down onto the floor by them as they forcefully take away that piece of paper in my hand. These guys...these techniques aren't moves that amateurs can do!

“Alright, this no.6 will be auctioned.”

“VERY GOOD, NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU OFFER, MIHARU WILL BUY IT!”

“““WHY IN THE WORLD IS SHIMIZU-SAN HERE!?”””

“Sorry, but this is a class affair — hm?”

“What's wrong, leader?”

“No, this..isn't 6. It's 9. Yoshii just looked at it in the opposite way.”

Sugawa-san opens the number in his hand. The number 9 has an arrow to indicate how it should be read.

“What the hell, so it's 9. That shocked us...”

“Yoshii really loves to create commotions.”

“Causing us to spend so much effort on this.”

“It's all Yoshii's fault for being unable to see such a simple number like that. How stupid.”

The FFF members grumbled as they turn away. That was close. If I really got 6, I would have been killed...

“Well, Aki...”

While I'm stroking my joints, Minami walks up to me.

“Hm? Minami, what's up?”

“What should I say? Well...before the meet, why don't we tie our legs toward and practice a bit? We need to practice on chemistry, so I think we should practice to match our breathing and rhythm...”

Minami starts to warm up as she asked me.

Practice for the 2-persons-3-legged race? I see. So Minami's seeing that as really important and actually willing to make a contribution to the class like that. That's nice. In contrast, those classmates of mine who would execute me out of jealousy are really rotten until I want them to the mud in their nails.

“Ah...but I feel that it's best to train with your own partner, right? It's more effective to train together with your partner.”

“I'm not deliberately closing my distance with your body—eh? What did you just say?”

“I just got 9. Didn't you get 6, Minami?”

I open my paper I just drew to Minami for her to see.

That's a pity. If I could partner with the athletic Minami, I can perform better in the 2-persons-3-legged race. And besides, there would be a lot of happy things happening as well...

“Oh, I see. So it's like that...if that's the case, it doesn't matter...”

Hearing me say that, Minami shrugs her shoulders and looks lost as she walks away. Did she feel that it would be easier to pair up with me? We do work together well. If she really thinks this way, it would be really great.

“I'm sorry, Minami-chan. The truth is that, I heaved a sigh of relief just now.”

“Don't worry Mizuki...I think I would do the same thing if our roles were reversed...”

Minami walked to Himeji-san, and both of them said something. It seems to be something involving girls. I shouldn't eavesdrop, and besides, it's time to go back to Yuuji and the rest.

After keeping the number I opened properly, I turn around to return to my usual friends. Yuuji and the rest seem to have finished discussing about the baseball match as Yuuji passed me my batting order number once I got there.

“What's wrong, Akihisa? You didn't get the number you want?”

Yuuji mocked me. If I really got the number I wanted, I would have been buried, right? In a certain sense, maybe such an outcome is really the jackpot.

Speaking of which, who's my partner?

“Oh ya, Yuuji, what's your number?”

“Hm? Well, I haven't drawn yet. I wanted to draw once those guys calm down, but I forgot.”

“Me too.”

“...Same here.”

It seems like these people haven't decided on their partners in the 2-persons-3-legged race. Since the partner number 9 hasn't drawn his number yet, one of these three people will be my partner. If that's the case...

“Please, Hideyoshi! You must draw 9!”

“Hm? What's wrong, Akihisa? You want to be partners with me?”

“Of course! I really want to be partners with Hideyoshi!”

If it's just Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini, I would choose Hideyoshi without exception. Considering the honor of the class, it would be better to choose Yuuji or Muttsurini, but things aren't that simple. This world has things that are more important than winning.

“We should draw our numbers too. Besides, the class challenges is more important than the baseball tournament as per schedule.”

“...It will be bad if we don't take part in those events.”

“I feel the same.”

The 3 of them head to the box. As things go, only those 3 haven't drawn numbers yet. The only ones with an undecided partner are me, Himeji-san and Minami. In other words, once they draw the numbers, there will be tragedies of bloodshed.

While everyone's trying to hold back their saliva, Hideyoshi reaches into the box.

Please, Hideyoshi, get 9!

“Uu, I got 9--”

“BRING IT ON, YOU GUYS!! I'LL DEFEND THIS PIECE OF PAPER EVEN IF I DIE!!!”

“““DON'T THINK THAT YOU CAN LIVE TO SEE THE SUN TOMORROW, IDIOT!!!”””

Not willing to lose to the overwhelming killing intent, I shouted out and gripped my fists tightly. There's only a few minutes before the 2-persons-3-legged race begins. Until then, I must survive!

“--Sorry, saw it wrongly. It's 6.”

““““...””””

The killing intent immediately dissipated. At this same time, my enthusiasm disappeared. If it's 6, then Hideyoshi's partnered with Minami...I feel that it's a pity, but there's a sense of relief here...

If that's the case, there's only 7 and 9 left. The next one will either be my partner or Himeji-san.

“...(sssst).”

Muttsurini reaches into the box. To him, this is a battle of winning and losing, right? If he can be with Himeji-san, he can touch Himeji-san's amazingly self-aware parts. That guy will jump into the vortex of happiness even when he knows that he would die. I don't want him to get such an envious outcome!

Muttsurini finally pulls out that piece of paper that decides his fate and slowly opens it. Now, what will he get...

“...9--”

“FAREWELL!!”

“DON'T YOU DARE ESCAPE!! EVERYONE, CATCH SAKAMOTO

AND OFFER HIM FOR A BLOOD SACRIFICE!!!”

“OSSSUU!!”

Less than a second after it happened, the moment Yuuji knew that Muttsurini's my partner, he realized that he would be Himeji-san's partner without drawing the numbers, and the class immediately ran off in a lightning quick hunting action. Mn, it's not that I don't understand everyone's feelings for wanted to catch that damned guy and execute him.

Looking at Yuuji and the other classmates sprint at a speed that's worthy of a sports meet, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini came up to me with their drawn numbers.

“Really, everyone's so energetic.”

“...That's really noisy.”

“What's wrong, Akihisa? Aren't you going to deal with Yuuji?”

Perhaps suspecting my calmness, Hideyoshi couldn't help but ask. Uu, I want to deal with him on my own...

“No problems. Even if I don't, Kirishima-san will--”

“..I won't forgive you for fooling around.”

“GUUUUAAHHH!!! SHOUKO!? WHERE DID YOU COME OUT FROM!!”

“--Kirishima-san will fulfill my wish for me.”

“I see. Either way, the way I see it, Yuuji most probably doesn't have much of his life left...”

Kirishima-san, who suddenly appeared out of nowhere, has already inserted her slender fingers forcefully into Yuuji's face. That should hurt...

“...Oh yes, Yuuji.”

“Oi, Shouko, hold on a minute! Who would talk casually in this situation? Normally, people would remove the force on the hand, right?”

“...Did auntie give you anything?”

“Hm? You're talking about my mom? Ahh, if that's the case...”

Yuuji, whose face is locked in by the fingers is still talking to Kirishima-san, muttering 'hold on a minute'. But for Yuuji to be able to talk in this situation, I think that's pretty impressive.

“...About that?”

“That spot-check, I handed that thing my mom wanted to pass to you in the bag as well.”

“...Bag?”

“Eh, the bag with the hypnotism book.”

“...Really?”

“Yes.”

“...You aren't lying to me?”

“I didn't.”

“...”

“Shouko, what's with you? What will happen if that bag's confiscated?”

“...To me...what...”

“So, what in the world are you saying—”

“...What...*did you do to me!*”

“UWAAAHHH!! IT HURTS, THIS HURRRRTTTTSSSSS!!!”

“...Everything in that bag got confiscated....”

“UWAAAAHHHHH!!!!”

I can vaguely hear a snap. The next moment, I found Yuuji lying limply on the floor.

“...Yuuji is...a big idiot!”

Leaving behind the unconscious Yuuji, Kirishima-san ran off without turning back.

Really, it can't be helped. At this moment, I can only take care of Yuuji. If I'm to keep him lying there, it'll be a huge disturbance to everyone else.

“What did you do, Yuuji?”

I lean over and grab Yuuji's hand to pull him up, asking about the situation just now. Yuuji shakes his head before answering. It doesn't matter anyway, but for Yuuji to be able to get up immediately after such an attack, I really feel that he's not normal in any sense.

“Well...it seems that it's because of me. My mom wanted to hand her something, and those magazines got confiscated as well.”

“Your mom asked you to give Kirishima-san something...”

Seeing her so angry, it must be something important.

“Speaking of what my mom would give to her, don't tell me...a marriage agreement!?”

Ahh, I see. Since Yuuji and Kirishima-san are still underaged, both sides have to agree to the marriage. The marriage agreement that she work so hard to get got confiscated. No wonder she's so angry.

“That's too dangerous...if that's the case, I really have to be grateful to that spot-check guu...!”

Yuuji again tumbled to the ground. Behind him, our classmates are holding tasers as they surround him.

“Take him away.”

“““Yes!”””

They lift up Yuuji's lifeless body and walk to a dark corner of the school compound. Now that Yuuji's gone, he will definitely be executed...but never mind. That guy will only makes things more difficult for me if he continues to live. More importantly, I should focus on the 2-persons-3-legged race.

“Anyway, my partner's Muttsurini. Let's do our best.”

“...Let's do our best.”

We hold our hands together forcefully. In terms of speed, Muttsurini's even faster than Yuuji. In a competition, he should be the best partner.

“Kinoshita's with me, right? Let's do our best as well.”

“Ya, I'd say, let's do our best.”

Minami leans over for some reason. Maybe she practiced with Hideyoshi already. Besides her, Himeji-san looks really worried.

“With Sakamoto-kun...I worried that I would drag him now...”

“Ahh, Himeji-san, I guess you don't have to worry.”

Once Yuuji comes back, his body would be in a state that he can't run normally.

Right now, our groupings are 'me and Muttsurini', 'Minami and Hideyoshi' and 'Himeji-san and corpse'. I can't take part in the mixed group, but at least this may be a good thing.

“What's wrong, Aki? Your partner's not Kinoshita, it's Tsuchiya...but you look rather happy!”

“Eh? Re, really?”

The reason why I felt really happy that my partner's Muttsurini is because I would die if I'm to partner with a girl...but it's really tough to say such things. Anyway, better slip through with a prank.

“I guess. Besides, having Muttsurini as a partner is better than having Yuuji.”

“Heh~ why?”

“Isn't Muttsurini rather cute?”

“““...Eh?”””

Minami and Muttsurini use a really serious expression as they asked me.

“Didn't Muttsurini wear a female outfit at the seaside? I find that he looked rather cute that time—ow!”

Saying till halfway, I got knocked lightly on the back of the head by someone. Who is it!?

“...Sorry, Akihisa.”

Turning around, I see Hideyoshi looking rather unhappy as he stood behind me. Eh? Did Hideyoshi just hit me?

“What's with you, Hideyoshi?”

“Uu...actually, I don't really know, but I couldn't help it...”

“Eh? Like that? Well, it doesn't matter anyway, since it doesn't really hurt...”

Maybe Hideyoshi's hand slipped? I can't imagine Hideyoshi hitting people randomly, so he must have hit my accidentally...but thinking about it carefully, he seemed to have done a wrestling move on me...

"Recently, it seems that Akihisa-kun's interests is spreading. I'll feel really bothered..."

"...Pervert.."

"YOU, YOU TWO ARE MISTAKEN! I'M NOT REALLY INTERESTED IN CROSSDRESSED MUTTSURINI, I'M JUST HAPPY THAT IT'S EASY TO WIN WITH HIM AS MY PARTNER!!"

I continued to shout to Himeji-san and Muttsurini, who're standing far away from me and muttering away. Speaking of which, I DON'T WANT TO BE CALLED A PERVERT BY SOMEONE LIKE MUTTSURINI!!!

"Heh~Aki, you're pretty confident."

It seems that my 'easy to win' words made Minami unhappy as she snapped back. What confidence? I'm not so confident anyway...

"Uu, everyone knows how amazing Muttsurini is, and I'm rather good in spots too."

If we're to compete in a 100m dash, I'll lose to Muttsurini by a bit, but my timing would be rather decent. If Muttsurini and I can get along well, it's not hard to beat the rest.

"Humph, and you really said it...so if that's the case--"

"Hm?"

"How about a race with us?"

"Eh? With you two?"

"That's right. Kinoshita and I. I remember each class is allowed to sent two groups up, right?"

Hearing Minami say this, I seem to remember that this is really the case. Ever year has their own race, and for classes A-F, each class is to send two groups, a total of 12.

Since Minami challenged me, it'll be interesting to challenge them.

"Mn, OK, we'll have a race then."

I pondered for a while before agreeing to it.

"Then, the loser will have to be punished."

"Eh?"

Minami added another condition.

Punishment...if it's Minami, what sort of punishment would she make me do? Just thinking about that alone makes me terrified.

"What's wrong, Aki? Don't you have any confidence of beating our girls group?"

"Shimada, are you mistaken? I'm not a girl."

Minami made a taunt.

Woah, Minami actually dared to say that. I don't really have much confidence in studies, but I can't lose in sports!

"Of, of course now! Okay, let's do this!"

Thinking about it, I kept competing with Yuuji with regards to all sorts of things. Compared to that guy's dirty and despicable punishment games, this should be a lot easier. Who's afraid!?

"As for the loser's punishment--"

"Mn, say it, I'll win anyway!"

"If I win--"

"Um hm? If you win--"

"--You'll go out with me."

"Eh? Go out with you...a weekend kind of thing? You're going shopping?"

Minami's thinking of asking me to go out and help her carry things, right? I heard that girls will spend a lot of time on shopping, so Minami would ask me to do this? Maybe I have to carry a lot.

"Uu...well, anyway, it's like that. Shopping, eating, watching movies...a lot."

"That, that's...we can finish it off in a day?"

It feels like the schedule's packed. It seems that the punishment game Minami just said is really punishment.

"...And I didn't just mean 'for one day' when I said that."

Minami muttered to herself in a barely audible voice. Is she planning something else?

"Mn...I can go out with you for one day. But on my side, if I win-let me think, I want a good meal."

"Okay, I'll promise you that."

"So is our bet on?"

"Yeah, if I win--you really have to go out with me!"

Minami sounded really serious. Maybe she would force me to eat something really expensive with her or give me some extremely tough project for me, or maybe she would playfully drag me to the lingerie section to buy stuff...

"The 2-persons-3-legged race is starting soon. All second year students, please gather at the line."

At this moment, the announcement can be heard from the loudspeakers.

Mn, I just don't need to lose this battle! Since it's decided, a man's word is a man's word.

"Okay! Oi, Muttsurini, stop standing far away from me like that, we're starting soon! We have to get a good result!"

"...Akihisa, don't get too close to me."

"I SAID IT WAS A MISUNDERSTANDING!"

I could only try my best to explain to Muttsurini, who's keeping his distance away from me, as we head to the starting point of the 2-persons-3-legged race.

☆

At the starting point where many contestants are bustling noisily. According to the agreement, I line up together with 'Minami and Hideyoshi's group' for the showdown.

"EVERYONE READY! GET SET--"

BAM!

The clear bang of the guns can be heard, and the front row of contestants started moving. We're in the next group, so it's about time to get prepared mentally.

Trying to relax my joints and muscles, I gently shake my limps and simulate the situation of appearing there later when I step up. When I go up, I have to time my steps and breathing and then slowly speed up.

"..."

Standing beside me, Minami's also waiting for the time to start. She seems to be nervous, looking extremely serious as well.

"You're rather serious, Minami."

"Eh!? Do, do I? I'm okay."

"Haha, why are you so nervous?"

"Since, since when am I nervous?"

"...You, you are, a little..."

"See, I said. It's good to be serious for the glory of the class, but if you don't relax, what's winnable will become unwinnable."

Even from afar, I can see that Minami's body is rather stiff due to nervousness. Why is she so enthusiastic about the 2-persons-3-legged race.

"...But I want to win no matter what..."

Minami muttered that softly, and those words enter my ears seemingly casually.

She's looking at the starting line with a serious look. I don't understand why Minami would be so enthusiastic, but since she's treating this so seriously, as the opponent who agreed to this, I should treat this match seriously. This should be a courtesy.

"EVERYONE! GET READY--"

BAM! The gunshot can be heard. The groups of people in front of us rush off. It'll be us next.

"Let's do this, Muttsurini, we'll be the first one to the finish line!"

"...(Nods head)."

"Kinoshita, I'll leave it to you then."

"Mn, I'll do my best too."

"Understood. Miharu would do her best too."

After swallowing saliva, we wait for the starting gun. The time to decide the victors is right now.

"NEXT GROUP, GET READY! SET--"

BAM--the crisp bang can be heard. Muttsurini and I move forward. Left foot first, then right, then left, I count the beats as we take steps. It feels good.

Then, we should slowly increase our speed and finally end up running forward at the fastest speed. At that point, we almost forget that it's a 2-persons-3-persons race as we run off as if we aren't bound to someone else in the first place. With a partner that can breathe and move in the same movement, I even forgot of the other person's presence.

"THAT GROUP...WHY IS IT 3-PERSONS-4-LEGGED?"

It's only now that Minami realizes that beside Hideyoshi, her other foot is tied together with Shimizu-san's.

"Eh? Wha, WHAT'S GOING ON! HOLD ON, MIHARU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?"

"Ahh, onee-sama...even when sticking to you, I can't feel that little chest that's sticking so close to your body. This alluring feeling is making Miharu unable to hold it any longer..."

"STOP TOUCHING ME! MOVE AWAY! IT'S IMPORTANT FOR ME TO WIN THIS!"

"What is onee-sama saying? Miharu's doing this for onee-sama's sake!"

"SINCE WHEN IS IT FOR MY OWN SAKE! IF YOU'RE DOING IT FOR MY OWN SAKE--OI, HO, HOL, HOLD ON! DID YOU JUST REACH FOR MY BACK AND UNDID MY BRA HOOK!?"

"No problems! Even if onee-sama doesn't use a bra to support, there won't be any problems at all!"

"YOU'LL REMEMBER THIS!"

"YES! MIHARU WON'T FORGET THIS FEELING!"

"I DON'T MEAN THAT!"

"What should I do in this situation..."

Recovering ourselves, we reached the end first. I guess our group won.

"Haa, haa, haa...Miharu, you..."

"That's wonderful, onee-sama!"

"What should I say, this two-persons-three-legged(?) race made me feel tired..."

We undo the ropes on our feet, and soon Minami's group came running in to the end.

The 3-persons-4-legged participants actually took second. No matter how I look at it, they're more impressive than us.

"MIHARU! WE LOST BECAUSE OF YOU!!"

"Miharu will go off here. We'll meet later, onee-sama!"

"AH! DAMN IT, MIHARU!!"

After bowing to Minami, Shimizu-san glared at me and shot off like a rabbit.

"...Really, she..."

Though angry, Minami gives a wry smile. That's strange? This match was ruined and yet Minami looked okay.

"Are you alright, Minami?"

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"No, well...if Shimizu-san didn't get involved, you two could have gotten first."

"Well...hm, maybe that would be that case."

"Isn't that right?"

They were able to run a 3-persons-4-legged race at that speed. If it were a normal 2-persons-3-legged race, it'll be hard to tell the outcome. But--

"Thinking through it calmly, this may be the better outcome."

Minami looked like she doesn't care, but wasn't she so adamant on winning at the start?

"Uu? What do you mean...by 'this may be better'?"

"If I use such a despicable mean--even if I feel alright now, I may regret it some day. It may be a little too late, but that's how I feel now."

Despicable means? What did she mean by that? Saying that to me who often hang out with those shameless and evil thugs, is she saying that she would do something even more cruel that I would regret? Thinking about that, my body started to tremble. If that were the case, I might really need to thank Shimizu-san.

"Then our bet is invalid because the match doesn't count."

"Eh? No need, I lose this time, so I'll treat you to a meal."

"No need, that's too awkward. Besides, we haven't had a real duel anyway."

"I insist! Or what is it? You're not willing to let me treat?"

"Uu...since you say it, I'll be thankful for that then."

"Mn, very good!"

After saying that, Minami gave me a bright smile.

"Oh ya, Shimada..."

At this moment, Hideyoshi, who was silent up till now, said rather hesitantly.

"Hm? What's up, Kinoshita?"

"No, what I want to say is...that 'thing' of yours is still open. Don't you need to wear it back properly?"

"Eh?"

Dok dok, Hideyoshi points at his own chest.

To be honest, I've been mindful of that ever since the beginning...

"Ah...no, that's not it! I didn't forget to wear it back because I felt that there's no difference in leaving the bra hook off!"

Minami covered her chest with both hands and rush to the other corner of the school. I see...so Minami didn't realize it because she didn't feel anything even with no support...

"...(collapse)."

MINAMI SHIMADA

In a corner where nobody noticed, Muttsurini passed out due to massive loss of blood.

The Fifth Question

Remember these baseball rules!

Yuuji: “So that's how it is. Since Himeji doesn't understand baseball, we will do a simple explanation of the rules.”

Akihisa: “We're normally the ones being taught, to think that it'll be the other way around.”

Mizuki: “Ple, please teach me well.”

Yuuji: “Now, we're going to explain the foul called 'balk[4]'.”

Mizuki: “Balk...is it?”

Yuuji: “That's right. This is a foul when the pitcher's pitching.”

Mizuki: “A foul? What is it about?”

Akihisa: “For example, when the pitcher's steps on the rubber to pick off the baserunner in place but didn't throw the ball out.”

Yuuji: “Or throwing a pickoff while the toes are facing the batter.”

Akihisa: “And there's also the 2-part pitching stance—stopping midway throwing the pitching motion, even if it's a little bit, these are all fouls.”

Mizuki: “Let me see, pointing the toes at the batter yet throwing a pickoff, and the 2-part pitching stance...”

Yuuji: “Anyway, it's not okay as long as the pitcher does something to hassle the batter or make the batter misunderstand.”

Akihisa: “Like letting the batter think that 'the pitch is coming' only to throw a pickoff, or making the batter think that the pitch won't be coming and pitching out of a sudden. This will severely affect the match.”

Mizuki: “I see...so letting people misunderstand is called a balk...”

MINAMI SHIMADA

Yuuji: “Well, yeah, you just need to think this way.”

Mizuki: “Then, Akihisa-kun...”

Akihisa: “Hm? What is it?”

Mizuki: “You balked.”

Akihisa: “Eh?”

Mizuki: “You balked.”

Akihisa: “What are you saying, Himeji-san?”

Mizuki: “Akihisa-kun balked.”

Akihisa: “Eh...”

Yuuji: “Haa...I'm too lazy to even comment about this...”

In the end, class 3-E and 3-F couldn't beat each other, and so we advanced to the next round without a fight.

Thus--

“It's time for the semi-finals.”

“Yup, the class of that Toko-Natsu pair.”

We've just battled against them in the test of courage a while back, and now we met each other so soon. It seems that we have sort of inexplicable relationship with those two.

“Um, so that means 2-A lost?”

“I guess they did.”

“They lost? They have the almighty Kirishima-san!”

The class rep of 2-A, Kirishima Shouko-san is someone whose scores is greater than even Himeji-san's. How did she lose to that Toko-Natsu group?

“Mm...well, she's not as bad as Himeji but Shouko doesn't know much about baseball. I guess that's the reason why she lost.”

“The way I see it, there are people who are as impressive as Kirishima.”

“Well, I guess so.”

Anyway, since class A, which is led by Kirishima-san, lost, we have to be ever more cautious now.

I guess there's only 1 or 2 times that we can get points from the third years.

“It's pointless to think about it now. Let's hurry to the sports center.”

“That's right. We should be able to understand once we play against them.”

I'm wondering about the fact that 2-A lost to them, but to us, this may be a good thing. Besides, the key to us winning is the plan Yuuji comes up with. Class 2-A has Kirishima-san, who understands Yuuji's personality and thoughts thoroughly, leading them, so they should be harder to beat than class 3-A with better marks.

“Yuuji...”

“Hm? What is it, Akihisa?”

“If class 2-A advanced, what would your plan be?”

I think Yuuji thought of a plan against 2-A already.

“I actually planned to get Kubo to join us by charming him over and play 10 vs 8.”

On hearing my question, Yuuji casually answered back. 10 vs 8...if we can do it, the difference between both classes can be reduced, so it will be to our advantage. It's just...

“Charming Kubo-san over? What are you saying? How can Kubo-san do such a dirty thing?”

“Really...if you can think this way, maybe it's a blessing to you...”

“The real Kubo got blinded by those corrupted feelings...”

“...Not knowing is the real blessing.”

“Eh? Why is everyone looking at me with pity when I mentioned Kubo-san?”

Those eyes looked like someone just died. I can't understand them at all.

“Oh yeah, Yuuji, what's our plan now?”

“To be honest, I really didn't expect 2-A to lose with Shouko and Kubo among them, so I didn't really make any adjustments for the match with class 3-A. However--”

Though he says this, Yuuji must have planned already.

“--I guess we should just kill their summoned beasts.”

I see, this plan is easy to understand.

“Seems like you guys don't have any sportsmanship at all...”

“This tactic is the worst...”

“Kill them? We're going to kick them out?”

Seeing Himeji-san look so puzzled, it seems that she still doesn't understand Yuuji's plan well.

“Got it. So we're going to beat those guys up during a mess-up until they can't show up?”

“...Who're we doing it on?”

“I'd say, you guys have already accepted such a plan without hesitation...”

Muttsurini, who's used to assassination, taking photos from the shadows, cover operations and doesn't even have any relation to sportsmanship. Of course, he accepted it without any resistance. I'm different from Muttsurini, I'm a pretty fair guy normally, but we have an aim we have to achieve no matter what, so it can't be helped that we have to use such underhanded means to win.”

“No, it's alright even when it's not a mess. There are many other means besides attacking directly.”

“Yup, like sliding into the opponent or throwing a 'Hit by Pitch'.”

“...Or faking a swing and hitting the bat on the opponent.”

“That's good. Great that you can understand.”

“I say...you guys are really too evil!”

It's too crude to call us evil. If there's a need to call us that, just say that we have a flexible approach to the rules.

Standing beside us, Minami rolls her eyes and says,

“I say, you guys...if you guys do such a thing, you deserve it even when you're scolded and called 'despicable'!”

Despicable? Scolded? What is this girl saying?

“Hoho, Minami, it seems that you don't understand.”

“Yup. Seems like Shimada hasn't gotten the whiff of our sportsmanship.”

“...Lack understanding.”

I, Yuuji and Muttsurini answered in turn. Can't be helped though. Even though she didn't study enough, there has to be a limit.

“Wha, what do you mean by that!? What are you trying to say?”

“Listen up, Minami.”

Seeing the troubled and puzzled Minami, all three of us answered loudly in unison,

“““DESPICABLE AND DIRTY ARE THINGS THAT ONLY LOSERS WILL

COMPLAIN ABOUT!!!”””

“YOU GUYS ARE REALLY ROTTEN!!”

This is the golden rule of winning and losing. To win, we have to pull all the stops.

“Uu, well, but even if we force the opponent's summoned beasts to be immobile, it doesn't mean that we will win, right? How should we deal with it? And looking at their points, we can't possibly do much damage to them, right?”

Hideyoshi voiced out his doubt.

That's true. It's okay to take them out, but what do we do after that?

“The opponents are the 3rd years. And the spot-check was only done on the 2nd years, so their desire to win isn't a great, right?”

“Mn, that's true.”

We're motivated to get back those confiscated items, and we're a whole lot different from the 3rd years who're just participating this school event out of necessity.

“So we'll use the difference in strength of motivation.”

“Using the difference in motivation? Even if you say that...”

“Ahh, well, just look at it. Besides, there's no other way anyway.”

“Mn, I got it somewhat.”

“...Understood.”

Yuuji didn't explain the plan further, and we head to the middle sports arena where the match will begin.

“...At times, I really thought, what's so good about that guy...”

“Using such evil means just to get back the A-books....”

“Ah, ah hahahaha...”

☆

"--STRIKE THREE! BATTER OUT!"

The umpire's call echoed throughout the sports arena, and the 1st batter Minami walked back in a lonely manner. As expected of class 3-A, their ball velocity and control can't be underestimated.

"Sorry, I really couldn't hit it..."

"Don't worry, Shimada. There's a huge difference in scores anyway."

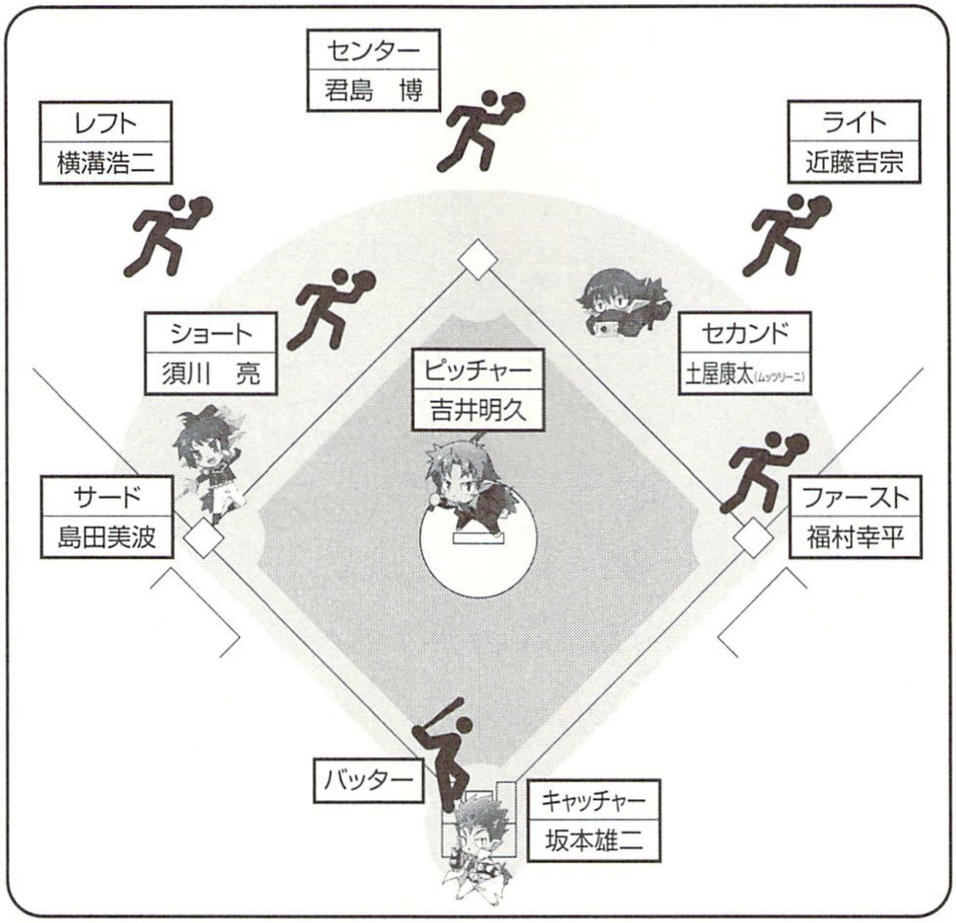
Yuuji consoled Minami like a coach. This time, we're using Chemistry as the subject, and as it's not Minami's speciality, it couldn't be helped that she couldn't hit it. Besides, Yuuji's plan isn't to hit the ball, but to attack through violence, so it doesn't matter that we didn't hit the ball.

"Summon!"

As the second batter, Sugawa-san called out him summoned beast. On a side note, this match's batting lineup goes like this.

1. First batter: 3rd baseman Shimada Minami
2. Second batter: Shortstop Sugawa Ryo
3. Third batter: Pitcher Yoshii Akihisa
4. Fourth batter: Catcher Sakamoto Yuuji
5. Fifth batter: Right fielder Kondou Yoshimune
6. Sixth batter: 2nd baseman Tsuchiya Kouta (Muttsurini)
7. Seventh batter: Center fielder Kimishima Hiroshi
8. Eighth batter: 1st baseman Fukumura Kohei
9. Ninth batter: Left fielder Yokomizo Koji

三回戦　3−A戦　Fクラス　スターティングメンバー


センター
君島　博
レフト
横溝浩二
ライト
近藤吉宗
ショート
須川　亮
セカンド
土屋康太（ムッツリーニ）
ピッチャー
吉井明久
サード
島田美波
ファースト
福村幸平
バッター
キャッチャー
坂本雄二

打順	
1番	島田美波
2番	須川　亮
3番	吉井明久
4番	坂本雄二
5番	近藤吉宗
6番	土屋康太（ムッツリーニ）
7番	君島　博
8番	福村幸平
9番	横溝浩二

ベンチ	
補欠	姫路瑞希 木下秀吉

システム管理者：藤堂カヲル

It'll be bad if we use violence right from the start, so the lead-off batter just need to hit in a normal manner, while Sugawa-san and me behind are to act according to the situation. If we feel that it's alright, Yuuji will give us the go. It'll be great if the first batter Minami can make them let their guard down...

Class A, Natsukawa Shunpei, Chemistry, 244 points.

VS

Class F, Sugawa Ryo, Chemistry, 59 points.

As how things went in the past, the pitcher and catcher are the baldy-sempai and the mohawk-head, the Toko-Natsu group that we're all too familiar with. I heard that the pitcher and catcher were different in their match against 2-A. Maybe they decided to take over this time because they know that Yuuji and I are partnering in this one. Those two really hate to lose.

“59 marks? This guy's score is really pitiful.”

Standing on the pitcher's mound, baldy-sempai saw our displayed scores and happily mocked us. This guy's looking down on us as usual.

But even though we got laughed at for our grades. Sugawa-san doesn't look like he really cares. His summoned beast just raised the bat and gets into a swinging position, As expected of a member of class F, he didn't lose his patience even though he got treated like an idiot.

“Oh, you don't even have the guts to argue back? Such a useless bum.”

After saying this nonchalantly, baldy-sempai's summoned beast gets into a pitching motion. IT gathers all the force in the arm, and at the next second, he throws the ball out.

“STRIKE!”

The next moment, the ball landed neatly into the glove of the mohawk-sempai's summoned beast. I noticed it a bit when Minami was in the batter box. That ball's really fast.

“What's wrong? That was right down the middle,” The baldy-sempai gave a mocking smile at us as he looked down on us and receives the ball from the catcher. Sugawa-san doesn't respond at all as he just readjusts himself as he readies his bat again.

Seeing Sugawa-kun's unmoved look, the baldy-sempai just looks bored as he snorts. He then pitches the second ball.

“STRIKE TWO!”

He didn't swing at all again. Now, it's two strikes. Sugawa-san continues to stare at the opponent, seemingly analyzing the situation calmly.

“You're going to be the 2nd one who's going to be struck out!”

Baldy-sempai pitches for the 3rd time. The breaking motion isn't too different, but the velocity's a lot slower than before.

Did he miss the timing? Sugawa-san didn't swing the bat as he just remained over there. The pitch just landed inside the glove. If that's the case...

“STRIKE THREE! BATTER OUT!!”

Like what baldy-sempai predicted, he really struck Sugawa-san in three strikes. Now, it's 2 men out with no baserunners.

“Oi oi oi, I threw that ball really slowly already. Shouldn't you swing your bat already?”

Baldy-sempai mocked us with a taunting tone. Ever since we began, his way of pitching was basically mocking us. This sports meet is planned by them, so they're still angry about this? They're the ones who came up with the punishment in the first place...

“What's wrong, Sugawa-san?”

I asked Sugawa-san softly as I went past him. Maybe he noticed a flaw in the opponent's attack.

“No way, I couldn't find a way to attack.”

“I see...”

“No matter how I tried to look for it, I couldn't find that sempai in the erotic yukata...”

“I see, this information is way too useful.”

If that's the case, I don't have to waste my time looking for that sempai. Though it's a little...no, it's really a pity, but now I can concentrate on the match. Let's think of it in another way. Maybe this might be a good thing.

“You're going to be the 3rd batter I'm going to strike out, Yoshii Akihisa!”

As I walked into the batter's box, the baldy-sempai on pitcher's mound said that to me.

Class A, Natsukawa Shunpei, Chemistry, 244 points.

VS

Class F, Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

After a while, our scores are shown. I understand that my score will cause me to be in a tough battle. Unless I can hit the ball in the middle, the ball shouldn't be able to fly into the outfield. However--

“I won't give up like that, Hengawa-sempai.”

“HOLD ON A MINUTE! DID YOU JUST MIX MY NAME WITH THE WORD 'HENTAI' TO CREATE A COMPLETELY NEW SURNAME!?”

“Ah, sorry, hentai-sempai.”

“NO!! I DON'T WANT YOU TO CHANGE IT TO 'HENTAI'! CALL ME 'NATSUKAWA'! JUST GIVE ME A PROPER NAME!”

“Sorry, because your name pronunciation is easy to mix up.”

“SINCE WHEN IS IT EASY TO MIX UP! THE ONLY THING SIMILAR IN

'NATSUKAWA' AND 'HENTAI' ARE THE NUMBER OF KANJI WORDS!!”

“My my, don't be so agitated, Natsukawa-hentai.”

“So you mixed them up because 'sempai' and 'hentai' sounded all too similar!?”

The fated duel's within the bat of an eye as baldy-sempai's burning up. This isn't any different from a hot-blooded shounen sports manga anyway.

“Damn you, Yoshii Akihisa...I'M SO GOING TO KILL YOU!!!”

Baldy-sempai's summoned beast raises its position and gets ready to pitch the 1st ball—which quickly came rushing here.

“STRIKE!!”

The first ball was right down the middle. I didn't react to this pitch at all as I analyze the situation.

“Heh, seems like you don't dare to take action.”

My reaction seem to make the baldy-sempai happy, as after he received the catcher's throw back, the baldy-sempai snorted in a rather good mood.

Then, he pitches the 2nd ball.

“STRIKE TWO!!”

At this moment, the opponent pitched another ball right down the ball.

“What the heck. You're pretty quiet now.”

Like when Sugawa-san was on just now, I just let two pitches fly by me to see if there's anything. Baldy-sempai just snorted in a bored manner.

“I'm just checking where you're pitching. I'll get the next one.”

“Checking where I'm pitching? HA! Stop lying! You just couldn't hit my pitch, right?”

“...”

I didn't answer him as I just wait silently for the next pitch.

Like how he pitched against Minami and Sugawa-san, the opponent's been pitching only in the middle. It's really just like his personality. He wants to strike me out within 3 pitches, so I guess the next pitch is straight down the middle again.

“Che, so you can only look at the ball? You guys are wimps!”

It's true that I've been observing the ball up now. However, I'm not just looking at the ball, but also the positioning of the pitcher. The baldy-sempai would stand at the same place after both the 1st and 2nd pitch. As expected of this 3rd year sempai. He really knows how to control his summoned beast, and his posture is rather stable.

But that's going to be his Achilles' Heel.

“Alright, time for the final blow!”

After getting into position, the opponent pitches the 3rd ball at me. I use this chance to match the opponent and swing my bat hard at the opponent.

The white ball zips through the air as it flies towards my head while I throw the metal bat at the opponent's face. Both of us use our killer throws, and at that nail-crunching moment, it finally reached my head.

“--DANGER!!”

The pitch the opponent threw grazes past my temples, and the metal bat I threw flies past the opponent's nose.

““YOU'RE TOO DESPICABLE!!””

“YOU TWO ARE THE SAME!!”

That damned bastard made me think that he would throw all three pitches down the middle, and the last pitch came flying at my temples! If I didn't dodge it at the last minute, it would have become a huge tragedy that couldn't be recovered!

“STRIKE THREE! BATTER OUT!”

My throw just now was treated as a swing by the umpire, so I got struck out. So now, with 3 men out, it will be a switch over.

There's no other ideas I can think of. Better gather with Yuuji and the rest on the bench and talk it through first.

“Sorry Yuuji, those guys may be wary of us already.”

“Don't mind. Just make up for that failure through your pitching.”

“...Don't worry, everyone will help you out.”

“That sounds rather normal, but for some reason, I'd think what you guys are talking about is the worst...”

“Don't these guys know of something called sportsmanship...?”

“Like being cautious, induced base on balls, there's really a lot of technical terms in baseball.”

Of course, I can pitch. My scores aren't great, so the power of the ball isn't much, but I'm rather confident of my control. I'll smack that ball hard into the opponent!

“Alright, time for us to go up. EVERYONE, LEVEL THEM TO THE GROUND!!!”

““““YEAH!!!””””

☆

“Are you Yoshii? Whether it's about the test of courage meet before or this competition...I'll make you regret taking on us 3rd years! Summon!”

The first batter from class 3-A entered the batter box with hostility. Seems like the test of courage made more seniors hate me now.

Class A, Hotta Masatoshi, Chemistry, 217 points

Vs

Class F, Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

Soon after the summoned beasts appeared, our scores were shown. As expected of a student from class A, the marks aren't to be underestimated.

(Let's take this guy head on. I want to see how far the ball will fly with such a difference in scores.)

That's what Yuuji's telling me with his eyes. Yuuji's right. Right now, we're facing class A opponents, so we have to see how good they are. If things so smoothly, we'll be facing the teachers' team that's even better than class A. We have to know how far we can go before we should hold back. That is an important thing.

I nod my head slightly to indicate that I understand, and then let my summoned beast get into a pitching posture. Yuuji's glove is located at the low outer corner of the strikezone. Even if it gets hit, at least it won't fly out if it's not a solid hit, right?

Compared to the baldy-sempai's pitch in the previous half of the inning, the pitch of mine is a lot slower as it flies towards Yuuji's glove.

“STRIKE!”

Facing the pitch I just threw, the opponent just let it by and doesn't swing the bat. Does he want to check my pitch velocity and power? The score's over there already, so he won't feel that I can threaten him. If the next pitch lands in the strikezone, I guess he would swing.

Then, Yuuji throws the ball over. This time, it's slightly high at the corner. Is he trying to make the opponent have a hard time hitting the ball (is that a free stance)? Well, I can't really think of a reason why such a difficult thing.

I follow the position Yuuji indicated, and this time, the opponent swung the bat.

KLANG—The crisp sound of the impact can be heard, and this time, the opponent did swing the bat.

It seemed that the batter either missed or wasn't used to playing baseball as the ball missed the center. The fly ball didn't drag its distance as it flies.

“DAMN IT!”

Looking rather angry and hurt, the opponent returned to the bench area.

I see. Even if the difference in scores is larger, it naturally doesn't cause the ball to fly far if the opponent missed the center. On the other hand, when facing class E, even though their scores were about the same, the ball would naturally fly near. It's not that power alone can win games as this would be no different from other baseball matches. However, the stronger class still has overwhelming superiority.

“Okay, I'm okay. Summon!”

A familiar voice can be heard as the second batter called out his summoned beast.

Class A, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Chemistry, 223 points

Vs

Class F Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

It's the other member of the Toko-Natsu pair, the mohican-head sempai who was the catcher. Even if he's really rotten deep inside, he's really worthy of being a member of A class, having such high scores.

“BRING IT, ON, YOSHII! SAKAMOTO! I'LL RETURN ALL THE SHAME I BORE WITH INTEREST!!”

The mohican-head sempai glared as he said that to us. Seems like he's rather pumped as well. What should I do...

(Let's pitch a ball first.)

Yuuji positions his glove. His glove is aimed at the far corner where the bat can't possibly hit. I guess he has a plan if he wants me to throw that far out.

I open my arms wide and pitch the first ball. At this moment, the mohican-head sempai deliberately swung the bat. Alright, now we have a strike--

“Ahh, my hand slipped!”

Just when I thought that, the mohican-head sempai continued his swing without stopping as he swung the bat back to Yuuji's summoned beast that's getting ready to receive the pitch.

Class A, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Chemistry, 223 points.

Vs

Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, Chemistry, 109 points.

Having been hit on the head hard, Yuuji's summoned beast had its points changed due to the damage, and the 200+ points up till now got deducted by a lot now.

“Sorry Sakamoto. That wasn't on purpose.”

Glancing back to look at the umpire's decision, the mohican-head sempai said that to Yuuji.

If that act just now was deemed as intentional, he would be forced off the field. That sempai was probably worried about this, which was why he just said those insincere words.

“...No, no need to worry about it. A lot of mishaps often happen in sports anyway?”

Yuuji doesn't look bothered by it as he said it with a smile on his face. His summoned beast bends down to picks up the bell that was dropped due to the impact.

“I see, Sakamoto's rather magnanimous.”

“No no. I'm not really a kind person.”

Both of them seem to maintaining their smiles as they said that peacefully. After that, Yuuji throws the ball hard at the opponent with all his force.

--At the summoned beast of that mohican-head sempai between us.

With the blunt impact sound, Yuuji threw the ball directly at the mohican-sempai's summoned beast head.

Class A, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Chemistry, 191 points.

Vs

Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, Chemistry, 109 points.

“Sorry sempai. It seem that I really can't control my summoned beast well.”

This time, it's the mohican-head sempai whose score got reduced. Yuuji lost about 100 points, and yet the opponent lost only about 30. It seems that since Yuuji's summoned beast was weakened, the difference in power was clearly shown on the ball that was pitched.

“But this can't be helped. A lot of accidents happen in sports, right?”

“Uu...ye, yea. I'll forgive you with a smile then. Besides, there wasn't much damage anyway...”

The mohican-head sempai smiled as he said this, but veins are popping out of his forehead. I see that he really looks like he wants to rush up to Yuuji. However, he showed these emotions to the umpire, “YOU TWO, CONCENTRATE ON THE MATCH! BOTH OF YOU WILL BE EJECTED IF YOU DO SUCH A THING AGAIN!!”

““…””

After being lectured by the umpire, those two didn't say anything more as they return back to positions to complete the mission. This time, Yuuji threw the ball into my glove. And my summoned beast readies itself to fire another pitch.

Before I pitched, my eyes receive the signal Yuuji gave me.

(It's time, Akihisa.)

(Got it.)

I finally got the attack signal from Yuuji. The catcher's glove is set at the middle, but my pitch is aimed at the batter's head. Aim at the head and throw. I must break the enemy's head!

“Bring it, Yoshii!”

The mohican-head sempai gets into the free-swinging posture...that's an easy way to swing, either for the catcher or the hitter—he should be aiming it at Yuuji, right? That hit just now must have vexed him. If that's the case, right now, we just need to blow off the enemy's head.

In this tense atmosphere, my summoned beast lets out the 2nd pitch.

The ball that's aimed at the forehead of the batter and the bat that's deliberately aimed at the catcher let out forceful hits as we all hit our targets like we were attracted.

“--HIT BY PITCH!”

Don, dong...the ball rolled on the ground several times, and the results of the attack are shown.

Class A, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Chemistry, 177 points.

Vs

Class F, Sakamoto Yuuji, Chemistry, 7 points.

“AKIHISA YOU IDIOT! YOU DIDN'T DECREASE HIS POINTS BY MUCH!!”

“WHAT ABOUT YOU, YUUJI! YOU GOT HIT TOO MUCH! DEFEND YOURSELF PROPERLY!!”

Yuuji got 100 points reduced, and that mohican-head sempai just lost 10+ points. If this keeps up, we're going to be killed by them.

“OI, YOU BASTARDS! THAT WAS DELIBERATE, RIGHT? YOU HAVE GUTS TO DO THIS TO YOUR SENIORS!”

“WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING!? YOU SEMPAIS ARE ANGRY THAT YOU LOST TO US IN THE TEST OF COURAGE, RIGHT!?”

“WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!? IF YOU'RE GOING TO DO IT LIKE THIS, FORGET ABOUT WHAT BASEBALL TOURNAMENT OR SUCH, LET'S JUST--”

“FINE BY ME! I HAD ENOUGH OF YOU THIRD YEARS ANYWAY. LET'S--”

The other bench players started a commotion. It's true that we didn't like each other, so it can't be helped that there would be so much antagonistic intent. Is this the chaos that Yuuji planned to raise?

Acting as the catcher, Yuuji smirked. If a battle's about to begin, I have to hurry up and choose my target so that I can punch him with all I got when I get the chance.

“STOP YOU!! ALL YOU IDIOTS!!”

At this moment, a certain person with a hoarse voice entered the fray that's about to become a battlefield. Who is it? Coming here to interfere while our objective was about to be complete!

“Really, you brats are really a lost cause...why can't you be obedient even when I let you people use summoned beasts to fight it out?”

Putting her hand on her forehead as she said this—is the damned old granny who always interfered with us.

“WHAT THE HECK, GRANNY!? WHY DID YOU COME HERE!!?”

Yuuji inadvertently clicked his tongue and questioned her. Besides, since his plan was ruined, I can understand Yuuji's reason for being unhappy.

“CALL ME THE PRINCIPAL, YOU DAMNED BRAT!!!”

The principal snorted as she turned to Yuuji. She then turned around to glare at all of us before saying,

“Really...the moment I heard that you two classes are matched up, I immediately came over to see the situation. To think that it ended up like this again. It's rare for the guests to find that our summoned beast baseball tournament is rather good. I can't possibly allow all you idiots to wreck it and ruin the school's reputation.”

It seemed that the damned old granny came over to watch us once she saw that it was us class 2-F vs 3-A...she really thought everything through.

“Please don't stop us, principal! We have a duty to use physical education to teach those useless scum from 2-F what respect and common sense is about!”

“We're the ones who can't stand you guys! Treating others as idiots and looking down on us so badly! Principal, please let us kill these sempai scums who love to put an act!

“I TOLD ALL OF YOU TO SHUT UP!!! YOU DAMNED BRATS!!!”

Facing the quarrelling group of people, the principal roared again. As expected, an elderly person sure can do things when she takes action. Everyone just shut up once she roared.

“Really, you idiots...so you would come up with this because the pain of the summoned beasts won't be inflicted on you...”

The principal shook her head reluctantly, thinking as she stares at us.

Finally, as she puts her hands on her hips, she decide to say to us,

“I've decided to change the settings of the summoned beasts in this match.”

“““Huh?”””

Everyone present just expressed their doubts in unison.

Change the settings of the summoned beasts? What does that mean?”

“Only this once, just once. I'll let all of you feel the pain that's inflicted on the summoned beasts. With that, you won't think about all sorts of nonsense and play ball seriously, right?”

Inflicting the pain the summoned beast suffers onto the body—anyway, it's about setting the summoned beasts to be like mine?

“Alright, that'll be it. All of you are to play seriously now!”

Leaving these words behind, the principal waved her hand and turn around to walk to the school building.

“Eh, now...”

Things just happened out of a sudden, and for a while, I didn't know what to do. It's alright to change the settings of the summoned beasts, but if that's the case, what about our plan?

“Sorry, please allow us to take a timeout.”

Yuuji asked for a timeout to the umpire, and this match just interrupted officially. After confirming that, we should start a strategy meeting.

Yuuji and the infield players are all gathered near the pitcher's mound. Okay, what do we do now?

“What do we do now, Yuuji? Our plan to create chaos was ruined.”

Our plan right from the beginning was to create chaos with the 3rd years, but it ended up like this, so our plan could only end with failure. We can't win if we play with them head on!

“No problems. Things are different from what I expected, but if that's the case, we can launch our secret weapon here.”

“Secret weapon?”

“That's right. It's a good thing that the next batter's that baldy, so there's no need to go easy on him.”

After saying that, Yuuji walked to the umpire and turned to the bench, asking for a switch of players.

“Himeji will replace Yoshii as the pitcher, Yoshii will be the catcher, I as the catcher will switch to Shimada's 3rd base.”

So the defensive alignments and pitcher are to be changed? So Himeji-san is the pitcher, I'll be the catcher, Yuuji defends 3rd base, and Minami returns to the bench to rest?

We follow Yuuji's instructions and head to our respectively areas. Himeji-san came out from the bench, running to Yuuji to say something to him. I can't hear them as they're too far away. What are they saying?

“Sakamoto-kun, I, I can't be the pitcher. I never played baseball before, and I can't really play sports...”

“Calm down, Himeji. Listen to me.”

“No, no! I can't! I can't do it.”

“Baseball focuses on teamwork, so the trust between the teammates is important

—especially the pitcher and the catcher, which has to be the closest.”

“Ah, I see...but...”

“A pitcher and catcher that can create a beautiful combination—it's often called 'husband and wife' in baseball.”

“Eh? Husband and wife...”

“That's right. From now on, I won't be the catcher. Akihisa will be the one. The result of this match will prove whether you and Akihisa can develop a good 'husband and wife' relationship.”

“...”

“You must believe in your relationship with Akihisa, so throw that ball in your hand out to see it. Akihisa will use all his strength and catch your pitch. That's the 'partner'--no, 'husband and wife' relationship.”

“I...I got it!”

“Remember this, Himeji. Use all your strength. Don't think about where the ball will go. Just use all your strength to pass your feelings to Akihisa. If you deliberately hold back, your trust between each other can't be established.”

“I understand!”

What's going on? I don't know what's going on, but I have a bad feeling about this.

Just when I'm trembling at this unknown chill, Himeji-san, who finished talking to Yuuji, came running over. She looks really energetic.

"Well...Akihisa-kun, please guide me through!"

"Mn, please guide me through as well, Himeji-san."

Himeji-san seem to be rather nervous as she started stuttering.

"I believe in Akihisa-kun, I'll pitch the ball with all I got!"

"Haha, I'm happy to hear that. Let's do our best."

"Okay! Let's do our best. Let's create a wonderful family! Well...my, my beloved..."

What? What did Yuuji just say to her?

"Then, please catch my pitch!"

After she took small steps to the pitcher's mound, Himeji-san starts her preparations as she gets ready to pitch. Oh well, better not think too much. I just need to do my own job.

I'm standing at where Yuuji's been standing up till now as I let my summoned beast squat at the catcher's position.

Alright. Right now, there's one person out, one man at first base, and the match continues.

"Heh~I don't really understand what stupid plan you're thinking of, but that's not going to work on me! I'll show my strength to you. Summon!"

The opposing 3rd batter--baldy-sempai entered the batter's box and gets ready to summon.

"I, I'll do my best...summon!"

The pitcher and batter's scores are shown half a second later.

Class A, Natsukawa Shunpei, Chemistry, 244 points.

Vs

Class F, Himeji Mizuki, Chemistry, 437 points.

"Wah! That's woman's score way too much..."

On seeing Himeji-san's score, baldy-sempai started trembling. That can't be helped. Like what everyone can see, Himeji-san's scores are the elite amongst the elites, so even baldy-sempai from A class can't possibly beat her.

"Damn it. Leaving Takashiro behind may be a bad decision..."

Baldy-sempai looked troubled as he muttered to himself.

Takashiro? This name seems familiar. Where have I heard that name before...

"O, okay, please guide me through!"

Just when I was thinking, Himeji-san's already getting ready to pitch. I should be the one who should learn from her--HOLD ON A MINUTE! I DIDN'T REALIZE IT JUST NOW, BUT AM I THE ONE WHO'S SUPPOSED TO CATCH HIMEJI-SAN'S PITCHES!!? I'LL DIE REALLY BADLY IF I FAIL!!

"Let me see. First, step on the rubber, and then..."

"Ho, hol, hol, hold on a minute Himeji-san!!"

"Hm? What's wrong, Akihisa-kun?"

I called out to stop Himeji-san, who's getting ready to pitch. Himeji-san is so gentle and understanding. I guess she would hold back a bit, but since the difference in our scores are so far different from each other, I don't know what's going to happen, so it's better to let her try out.

"You see a runner at first base? Throw a pickoff at first base to prevent him from stealing base. Would you like to try it?"

The runner at first base didn't run too far away. I just want Himeji-san to throw a pickoff there so that she can get used to it. Anyway, I just want to let Himeji-san throw a ball first.

"A pickoff--ah, I got it. I just need to throw to first base, right?"

"That's right. Can you please throw to Fukumura-san at first base?"

"I understand. Then--"

Himeji-san's summoned beast raises its arm and gets into a pitching position.

"Heh!"

"................AH?"

Class A, Tsunemura Yuusaku, Chemistry, DEAD.

Vs

Class F, Himeji Mizuki, Chemistry, 437 points.

Class F, Fukumura Kohei, Chemistry, DEAD.

Vs

Class F, Himeji Mizuki, Chemistry, 437 points.

--There were immediate reports of two deaths.

KLANG...with that, the sound of some heavy objects tumbling down continuously can be heard.

The summoned beasts of the runner at first base, that mohican-head sempai and Fukumura-san, who's watching first base disappear together into the wind like good friends.

""WAAAHHHHHHHHH!!! IT HURRTTSSS!!! MY BODY HUUUUUURRRRRTTTTTSSSS!!!"

After a short while, controllers of the summoned beasts cried out in pain as well.

It seem that the settings change managed to catch up to the ball, so both of them got the effects of the damage done to the summoned beasts, which caused them to roll on the floor in pain.

"Ah! So, sorry! I didn't know how to control the strength on the ball, so..."

Himeji-san frantically lowered her head to apologize to both of them who're rolling on the ground. However, I don't think they would bother hearing her apology now.

"Will the bench players please take over the injured players so that we can continue the match?"

The refereeing teacher coldly asked the players to come on. The 2 severely injured players who are unable to move due to the pain are carted off. The opponent sent out one sempai, while Hideyoshi, who was on the bench, replaced Fukumura-san to guard 1st base.

"Uu...I failed..."

Though she managed to bury two people at one go, Himeji-san seem to be remorseful over it. If possible, I would like to encourage her, but if she doesn't control her strength and use all her force, the next ball will strike me, the catcher. If I get hit by that powerful ball, I'll most likely get sent to a whole new dimension in pain. Though I'm really sorry to her, I really don't want--

"Don't mind, Himeji. Just pitch with all you got."

"But..."

"Don't worry too much. That's what a catcher should do."

"But if I do this, Akihisa-kun would..."

"Oi oi, why are you saying such a thing? Don't you trust Akihisa at all?"

"Ah...no, that's not it! I never doubted Akihisa-kun!"

THAT BASTARD'S DEFINITELY TRYING TO KILL ME!!!

"Akihisa-kun, here I come!"

NOOOOO!!! HIMEJI-SAN, DON'T THROW THAT BALL AT ME!!!!

"He, heh!"

"Hm? eh? How did it--"

Himeji-san let out a cute sound and a pitch that's not cute at all. The pitch that can't be seen with the eyes landed directly on the 3rd year senior who's waiting to bat next.

Class A, Kindaichi Shinnosuke, Chemistry, DEAD.

Vs

Class F, Himeji Mizuki, Chemistry, 437 points.

The 4th batter of class 3-A didn't even manage to show his score as he immediately become a lifeless soul, never to come back again. Because of that, he became the 3rd victim.

"RE, REF!! THAT WAS A DANGEROUS BALL, WASN'T IT!!? SHE SHOULD BE EJECTED!!"

Standing in the batter's box, the baldy-sempai's expression changed greatly as he argued that Himeji-san broke the rules. But before the umpire could say anything, Yuuji, who's standing at 3rd base, says,

"Oi, sempai? How can you say such a cruel thing? Look at Himeji. You know that she didn't do it on purpose!"

"So, sorry! This is my first time as the pitcher. That's why I'm so nervous..."

Himeji-san came running over to class 3-A's bench and continued to bow to them in apology. Seeing Himeji-san looking so lost about what to do, I don't think anyone would doubt that she didn't do it on purpose.

"ST, STOP JOKING AROUND, SAKAMOTO!! SOME THINGS CAN'T BE FORGIVEN EVEN IF IT'S NOT DELIBERATE!!"

"SHUT UP, YOU SCUM!! Sensei, think carefully. One side is a cute student who's working hard to participate in a class event even though she's not good at it. The other side is one whose evil intent is to tarnish the sacred meaning of sportsmanship, a dumb, evil and ugly sempai. As a teacher, which side will you stand on?"

"BEGIN!"

"U, umpire?"

The umpire mercilessly announced the continuation of the match. Compared to our dastardly deeds, Himeji-san's actions aren't of ill intent at all. In that case, the judgment's correct, but I find that this umpire has a rather distorted view on values.

"OI, YOSHII! HURRY UP AND CHASE THAT WOMAN AWAY! YOU'LL DIE IF THIS KEEPS UP!"

"HO, HOW CAN I DO THAT? DON'T LOOK AT HER LIKE THAT, HIMEJI-SAN'S REALLY SOMEONE WITH VERY RADICAL THOUGHTS!!"

I continue to talk to the baldy-sempai in the batter's box. If I can do it, I really want Himeji-san to get off the field!

"Uu...it's really hard...maybe I can pitch better if I use a little more force..."

Himeji-san returned to the pitcher's mound and said that, causing me to break out cold sweat.

HOW IS IT POSSIBLE!! SHE DIDN'T THROW THAT BALL JUST NOW AT FULL STRENGTH!!

The one with the ability to be the valedictorian of our year pitched that without noticing the control. It seem that only the bench is a safe zone. If that's the case, it just made me forget that we have a baseball tournament going on. This isn't a match, it's a one-sided massacre.

"Th, this time...I must pitch it at Akihisa-kun!"

""EEIIYYYYYAAAAA!!""

Baldy-sempai and I let our summoned beasts throw our bat and glove away as we just cared about using both hands to cover our heads and duck. A heavy fastball flew right above our summoned beasts' head.

"BALL."

The umpire decided that it was a ball, BUT WHO WOULD CARE ABOUT WHETHER IT'S A STRIKE OR A BALL NOW!!?

"SUB HER OUT, SAKAMOTO! GET THAT PITCHER OFF!!"

"What are you saying, sempai? Himeji's pitches are getting sharper. Isn't she getting into the groove?"

"I CAN'T SEE HER AIMING AT THE CATCHER'S GLOVE!!!"

I agree with that.

Ignoring the baldy-sempai and Yuuji who're arguing, Himeji-san stands on the pitcher's mound, seemingly muttering about something.

"Uu...maybe it's because I didn't trust in Akihisa-kun thoroughly, so I couldn't pitch well...I have to trust Akihisa-kun more..."

Thus, she grasps onto the ball in her hand even tightly as she prepares to do something even more shocking. Eh? What's Himeji-san doing?

"HO, HOLD ON A MINUTE!! DID THAT PITCHER JUST CLOSE HER EYES!!?"

"That's not the case, that's the trust between partners. It's because she believes in the guidance of the pitcher that she would close her eyes to pitch."

"HOW IS SHE GOING TO BE GUIDED BY THE CATCHER IF HER EYES ARE CLOSED!!? YOU'RE SPOUTING NONSENSE HERE!!"

"That's it. It must have opened her inner eye. A truly great player doesn't need sight, he just needs to detect the presence of the pre--the opponent's location."

" SO WHAT IF SHE FOUND MY LOCATION! THE MAIN POINT'S TO PITCH DIRECTLY INTO THE STRIKEZONE, RIGHT!!? DID YOU JUST NEARLY CALL ME 'PREY'!!?"

"Please don't say something overbearing, alright? Prey-sempai?"

"DID YOU JUST SAY THAT!!? YOU JUST CALLED ME 'PREY-SEMPAI' WITHOUT THINKING, RIGHT!!?"

The most important thing right now is whether the prey Yuuji just mentioned involved me or not.

"Well...Himeji-san! Can you hear me? Actually, you don't have to be so serious..."

"Hoo...ha...hoo...ha...it's alright, I can pitch a strike if I believe firmly in Akihisa-kun..."

"Himeji-san?"

It seems that Himeji-san just entered a zen phase as she's unable to receive my words or the hand signals. Anyway...I have to use my own means to survive if I want to see the sunrise tomorrow.

"Can, can't be helped. If that's the case, I'll just dodge sideways when Himeji-san pitches. If my luck is good, maybe I can keep my own life!"

"THAT, THAT'S TOO UNDERHANDED, YOSHII!! YOU JUST WANT TO SAVE YOUR OWN LIFE!!?"

"Sorry sempai, I still love my life!"

On a side note, the basic rules of baseball indicates that the batter can't leave the batter box. I feel somewhat sorry that the baldy-sempai in front of me will have to dodge Himeji-san's pitches in the narrow area.

"I'm pitching, Akihisa-kun!"

"PLEASE TRY AND OPEN YOUR EYES, HIMEJI-SAN!!"

Facing Himeji-san's declaration, I could only beg for her to spare my life. But it seems that my wish didn't reach her heart as Himeji-san continued to keep her eyes closed and pitch the ball with all her strength.

A heavy fastball

With tremendous power

Aimed at the baldy-sempai's summoned beast's head.

".........................waaa........."

Everyone knows of a fruit called pomegranate that blooms in the beginning of summer? It's a sweet and sour fruit that's bright red. It grows on the tree, and when it ripens without anyone picking it off, it will drop because it overripes. Once it drops onto the ground, the crimson red flesh and juice will spill out all over the place.

Right now, the image of the batter that's shown into my mind started to remind me of the terrible state when the pomegranate drops for some reason.

Class A, Natsukawa Shunpei, Chemistry, DEAD.

Vs

Class F, Himeji Mizuki, Chemistry, 437 points.

"That's...overkill...that woman's...the...devil..."

Standing beside the summoned beast that got battered badly, baldy-sempai suffered lots of pain as he looked like he's about to lose consciousness and collapsed onto the ground. Seeing this...I can only feel pity for him.

After lunch, I think some people will recover, right? But the baldy-sempai's summoned beast carried its thoroughly devastated state as it disappeared into mid-air.

"Well...Akihisa-kun, was that pitch alright?"

It's only at this moment that Himeji-san finally opened her eyes. It's because she kept her eyes closed that she didn't see that burst pomegranate-like scene. Maybe this might be a good thing to her.

"Well...if we considered our initial aim, that ball was well pitched..."

But for some reason, there's some emotion within me that's making me unable to be happy.

"Next batter, please step up the plate."

The umpire coldly prompted for the next batter.

Looking over at the 3-A bench, everyone there is deliberately looking down, not daring to look at the umpire straight in the face.

"HEHE!! THE 3RD YEAR BATTERS ARE SCARED!!"

It's unknown where that mockery came from.

Hoo...I think the batter's not the only one who's scared.

"SENSEI! WE RAN OUT OF SUBSTITUTES!!"

Class 3-A reported that they don't have any substitutes left. If that's the case, since there are other events going on, there could only be 2 bench players. What should be done? Is he going to get those unregistered to play?

At this moment, I remember a rule included in the summoned beast baseball tournament. Yuuji added a rule that 'Each team is to hand in the list of players. Those players whose names aren't on the list will be unable to take part in the match'. That damned bastard created this plan to fulfill that rule...?

"Not enough bench players? Well...we'll skip past that person's batting order. The other players are to do their remedial tests."

The teacher made that cold decision. This sounded reasonable, but wouldn't that mean that the other players will have to do the tests just to take Himeji-san's killer pitches...?

"Right, so now to the next batter--5th batter, please step up. Those players with no points left are to take part in the remedial tests."

"""CLASS 3-A DECIDES TO FORFEIT!!!"""

And thus, with two Hit by Pitch at two batters and having caused 4 martyrs, a damage rating of 200%, the pitcher of F class Himeji Mizuki became a legend in the sports meet.

The Sixth Question

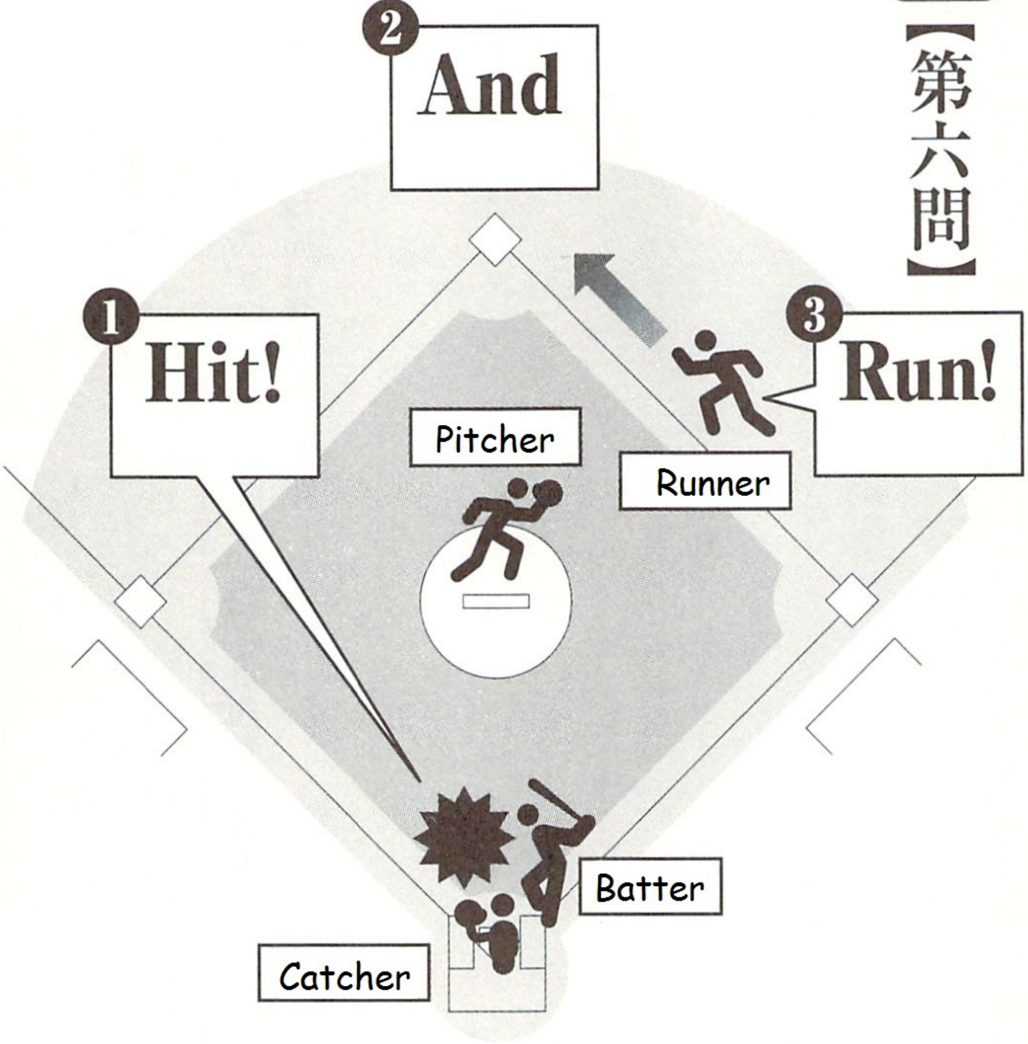
覚えよう！野球のルール！

【第六問】

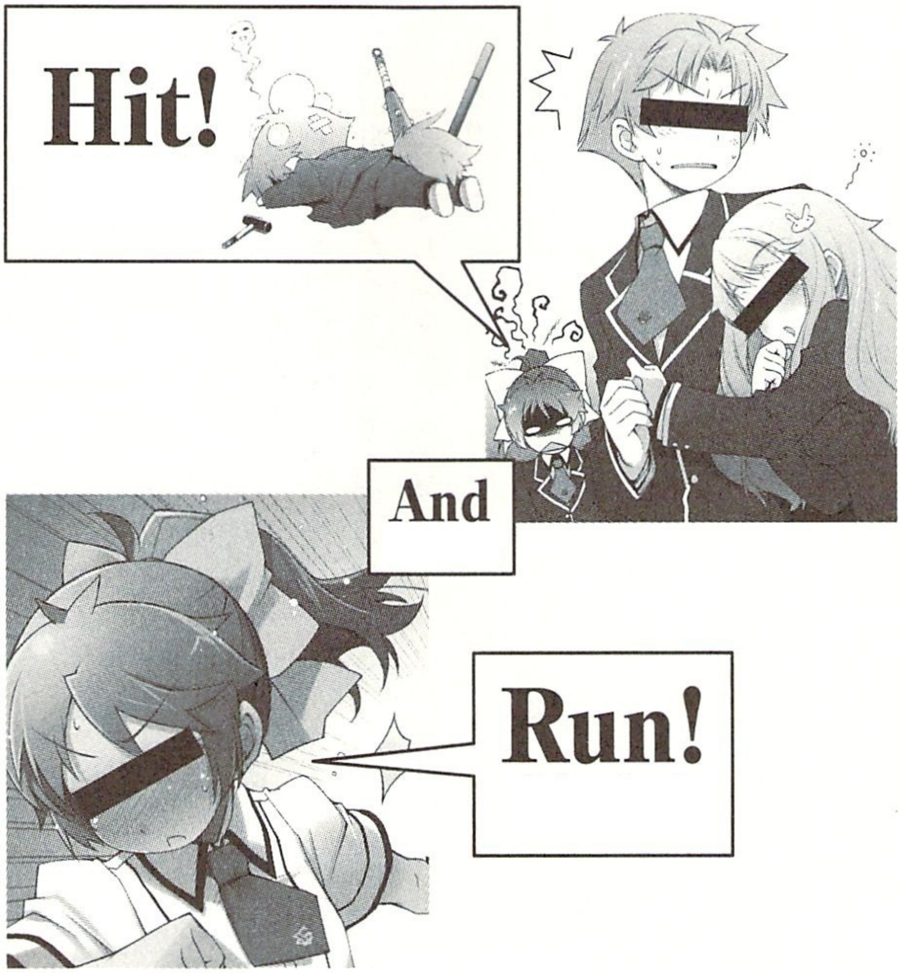
How is the Hit-and-Run done in Baseball?

……

The Hit-and-Run Yoshii Akihisa Knows.


② And
① Hit!
③ Run!
Pitcher
Runner
Batter
Catcher

The Hit-and-Run Himeji Mizuki imagines it to be.



※What is this Hit-and-Run?

As the pitchers pitches the ball , the baserunner runs off to the next base, and the batter must be able to hit the ball out to let the baserunner get onto the next base--This is a common tactic in Baseball

"Yuuji…you actually thought of such a terrifying plan…"

"No, I didn't expect the feedback on the summoned beasts at all…after seeing that, even I had to feel pity for them…"

"Well, Akihisa-kun…"

We returned to class F's waiting area. After taking victory from class A, we could look forward to a happy lunchtime, but for some reason, I just can't feel happy.

"Besides, I thought that 'the 3rd years wouldn't accept supplementary tests to continue the match because they didn't have anything confiscated'. If that damned old granny didn't interfere, it wouldn't have ended up like this."

"Well, Sakamoto-kun…"

Let's ignore the Toko-Natsu group, we really did something overboard and cruel to the 4th batter sempai. I hope he won't get any mental trauma…

"The way I see it, the principal seemed to find that this was too much. After the match, she promised to set the summoned beasts back to how it was."

"…That was a tragedy."

"Well, Kinoshita-kun, Tsuchiya-kun…"

Seeing that scene of despair, the principal probably felt that she's not worthy to be an educator for making such a cruel decision. I can only offer my prayers to the four souls who lost their lives.

"Okay, as for the match in the afternoon…"

"Well…PLEASE LISTEN TO ME!"

We tried to look away, ignoring reality, but we just couldn't run away anymore. Thus, the 4 of us could only look like we're about to cry and timidly turn around to the person who spoke.

""""…Yes""""

“Actually, I prepared bentos for everyone…”

Himeji-san said that as she pulled out a large bento that’s wrapped in cloth. Actually, I knew it…the moment I saw Himeji-san carry such a thing to us, I knew that she was carrying some ominous presence of death to us. I just didn’t want to admit it.

“Really, Mizuki, you always work hard no matter what it is.”

Standing beside Himeji-san, Minami scowled for some reason. Seems like she’s really unhappy for some reason.

“Eh, anyway, you two can sit down first.”

Trying to move out of position to let Himeji-san and Minami sit down, Yuuji stood up and then turn around to walk to another direction.

“Alright, I’ll go get drinks.”

“Nonono, I’ll do it, Yuuji. I’ll buy the drinks.”

“You guys don’t need to say that. I’ll handle the buying of the drinks.”

“…I’ll buy it.”

We just stood up without letting each other get up. These guys—they definitely intend to use the excuse of buying drinks to get away, right? Those guys are despicable! Don’t they know any shame?”

“Haha, you don’t have to force yourself, Akihisa. Don’t you need money to buy drinks?”

“No need to worry about me. I’m living pretty well now. Besides, I’m the one people think of when they need a gofer. There’s no one else more suited for this role then me.”

“Hold on a minute! I’ve been doing that for 15 years, and I’ve been a gofer for my sister since young. You can’t look down on my running ability. Let me show my more refined manner of running than Akihisa!”

“…No, the most important thing is speed. The gofer’s work is definitely most suited for me ‘the king of sprinting through the darkness’.”

Everyone tried to anchor the gofer role to get away from the scene. If I can get away from Himeji-san’s vision, pretend to get lost or give an excuse that the drinks in school were sold out and that I had to go out, I guess 3 people will be the sacrifices and get dealt with the devil once I come back.

“You guys really dare to say that! Do you think you can beat my running ability if I get serious?”

“What nonsense are you spouting!? My running ability several hundred times better than you! You minor characters just need to stand aside!”

“It’s really sad that you’re calling me a minor character who doesn’t have much aptitude. You dare to say that without even seeing my running ability.”

“…Alright, stop yapping and let me buy it.”

If you guys can’t understand, I’ll just show my ability to shut everyone up. I’ll let you see my real hidden ability.

“Ah, I prepared the drinks for you guys.”

““““…………ahh……I see……….””””

Minami’s earnest kindness made us cry.

“Alright, hurry up and sit down.”

After Minami joined in, Himeji-san sat with Minami.

“We, well, Himeji-san, what kind of bento did you prepare?”

“Uu, uu, I, I’m really looking forward to it…”

“Ya. Haha, hahahahahahaha…”

“…My heart’s beating really fast, I can’t even control it…”

All of us feel the cold sweat floating down our backs, and Himeji-san slowly unravels the cloth of the bento, letting us see the contents inside.

“Eh? That’s strange? Did you prepare a lot less than usual, Mizuki?”

Looking at the bento Himeji-san made, Minami couldn’t help but ask that. Hearing Minami say this, I seem to feel that the measurement’s really a little too small. Besides the multi-layered wooden box, there’s also another bento box that’s smaller by more than two times. If I remember correctly, Himeji-san would prepare a lot more than this serving.

“Ah, yes. Actually, it’s because I failed…”

Saying that, Himeji-san opened that larger wooden box. What’s inside…are little triangular rice balls.

“Actually, I made some other dishes, but…”

Speaking of which, the other lunch box should have some dessert of something. I see, because of the lack of side dishes, the bento this time is a lot less than usual.

“Do you want to eat some, Minami-chan?”

“Can I? Don’t mind me then.”

““““AHHH!!!””””

Before we could even stop her, Minami reached out and stuffed a rice ball into her mouth. Damn it! If we knew that things would become like this, I would have stuffed the rice ball into Yuuji’s mouth.

As we take a deep breath and look on, Minami continued to chew on the rice ball.

That’s strange? Did something…didn’t something, happen?

“Mn, it’s just ordinary rice balls, it’s delicious."

“Really? That’s great.”

Himeji-san smiled with relief. Eh, why is Minami alright?

“Oi, Himeji, how did you make these rice balls.”

Yuuji seemed to harbor the same doubts as me as he couldn’t help but ask Himeji-san how these rice balls were made. I have never heard that Minami’s digestive system exceeds normal capability, so there should be some hidden secrets within this rice ball.

“I didn’t add anything to it. I just added salt to cooked white rice and pinched it to a triangular shape before wrapping it with seaweed.”

I see. With that method, it’s true that it’s hard to make something weird. Maybe that’s the reason why Minami was able to escape safely.

“The rice ball’s really normal, but I worked so hard on the side dishes…”

In other words, this box of rice balls is edible—no, that’s not right, they should be the highest quality rice balls that Himeji-san made from her beautiful hands! If I remember this, I won’t have to worry about it.

“Itadakimasu, Himeji-san!”

“Ah, okay, please eat.”

I pick up a rice ball from the bento box and put it in my mouth. It’s just ordinary rice balls with only salt and seaweed added, but for some reason, it tastes really delicious.

“I won’t hold back then.”

“I’ll have some too.”

“…Itadakimasu.”

The rest all reach out and put the rice balls into their mouth. It’s because we know of how Himeji-san would cook her food that we had to treasure this ordinary taste of the rice balls. It’s like a lost traveler in a desert finding and drinking clear fresh water!

“Oh, oh yes, actually…”

“Hm? Minami? What’s wrong?”

“No, well…uu, didn’t Mizuki just say that she failed to make her side dishes? Well…that, if you don’t mind…”

Minami timidly reached out from something behind.

“Hm? Is that a bento? Isn’t that your share, Minami?”

“Ye, yeah. But I just ate Mizuki’s rice balls, so…I’ll share this with everyone…”

While saying that, Minami opened the bento box in a rather stiff manner. There are sandwiches of assorted flavors. Besides the normal tomato and lettuce sandwiches, there’re also egg, tuna, potato and cheese sandwiches. On the other side, there are pieces of fried chicken and omelets, even sausages too. No matter how I look at this—this is one luxurious bento!

“Oh~your own share~”

“Even though you say that you want to eat it yourself, there’s quite a lot of serving.”

“…How dishonest.”

Yuuji and the rest showed a sinister look as they looked at Minami’s sandwiches. To a girl of her age, this serving would be too much—they’re probably making fun of Minami with this attitude. Really, these guys’ interests are really lousy.

“I, I just made a little too much! Because sandwiches…I can bring them home to eat even though I, I can’t finish.”

Can’t finish? Minami’s too wasteful for saying that.

“Minami, you should tell me at this point of time. I would help you finish it up WAAA—”

Suddenly, I felt an electric shock like pain from my back. This, isn’t this…a protractor? Who used this to attack me!

“Yoshii Akihisa…I hate you! If Miharu can kill someone with just hate, it’ll be really great…”

A voice of a girl from class 2-D came from somewhere. Saying about what using hate to kill…didn’t you just attack me already!?

“This presence…it’s Miharu!”

“Damn it…I was found out? If that’s the case—I’ll give up on the ambush and strike now! ONEE-SAMAAAA!!!”

“I HAVE NO TIME TO DEAL WITH YOU RIGHT NOW!!”

Minami frantically got up to avoid the thing that’s rushing over here with dust as she gets off in another direction. Woah, she’s really fast.

“ONEE-SAMA~ ONEE-SAMA!~ O-…NEE…AHH…”

“DON’T, DON’T COME ANY CLOSER! YOU’RE BECOMING EVEN FREAKIER NOWADAYS!!!”

“WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, ONEE-SAMA? IF IT’S FOR ONEE-SAMA, MIHARU WOULD GLADLY FALL INTO THE FALLEN PATH!!”

“THAT’S THE REASON WHY I’M FREAKED OUT!!!”

Why did this happen? Looking at Shimizu-san now, I suddenly remember the demonic presence during the test of courage.

“Well, forget about it. That’s how they build their relationship.”

“Ya, like Yuuji and Kirishima.”

“…Quite the good relationship.”

“It really makes me want to smile.”

“OI, YOU GUYS! STOP ACTING LIKE IT DOESN’T INVOLVE YOU!

DON’T YOU KNOW HOW THE VICTIM INVOLVED KEPT THINKING OF WAYS TO SURVIVE!?”

It’s a common understanding that those in the way of love should be kicked aside, so I guess we shouldn’t disturb them. It’s more important to enjoy this lunch in front of us.

“I’ll have some of Minami’s sandwiches then.”

I pick up a sandwich and put it in my mouth. This seems to be the tuna and potato flavor sandwich. It’s nice to eat such things when my stomach’s rumbling. The somewhat hard and chewy feeling’s are little bits of corn, and there’s even ham slices in it. These are added to mayonnaise, tuna and potatoes, and finally some black pepper for tasting. This unexpected spicy flavor’s really delicious to me who likes to put spicy stuff in food.

“Mn, it’s nice.”

“Ohh, this is rather good.”

“I feel that the fried chicken and omelets are nice too.”

“…Very good.”

“Minami-chan’s cooking’s really good. I have to work harder!”

While biting onto the sandwiches Minami prepared, all of us can only praise her for that. Minami’s really like a girl in this aspect…if she didn’t exert violence that randomly, she should be rather popular with the guys. That’s really a pity.

“Today’s lunch’s rather rich. Fried chicken to go with rice balls.”

“Yea, I thought of going to the welfare club to buy bread for breakfast this morning, but to think that I would get a chance to eat such a nice meal.”

“…That’s great.”

I chew on the fried chicken Minami prepared, and take another bite off the rice ball Himeji-san made. Well, the rice ball Himeji-san made is nice as well. The white rice’s cooked to perfection, and there’s the perfect amount of rice. Even the force used to pinch the rice is just perfect. This is the difference of eating hand-made rice balls as opposed to eating the ones from convenience stores. It’s simple, yet I won’t get sick of it.

“Oh yea, where’s the drinks?”

“Speaking of which, Minami seemed like she took them away…”

Looking over at the sports arena, those two probably went to build on their relationship. I haven’t found out where they are anyway.

If that’s the case, we can only buy our own drinks.

““““…””””

Looking up, I exchange looks with Yuuji, Hideyoshi and Muttsurini.

We quickly turn our backs on Himeji-san, and wordlessly begin our janken. They chose stone in unison, and I chose scissors. Did I lose…damn it.

“Sorry Akihisa~I want cola.”

“I want tea.”

“…Lemon soda.”

These three guys look rather happy as they ordered the drink they want. Everytime, it just seems like having someone else buy drinks for me would be tastier then buying them on my own…because the loser has to treat.

“Okay okay, I got it. What about you, Himeji-san?”

“Eh? What did you say?”

“I’m asking you what you want to drink. Just treat it as payment for lunch.”

“Ah, no need. I’ll feel really sorry about this.”

She prepared lunch for us and I only wanted to serve her a drink. Himeji-san doesn’t need to find mindful about this and hassle with me.

"Then, how about red tea? You love to drink that during lunch."

"Ye, yes."

"Then please wait. I'll come back with it later."

I get up from my seat and head to the school hurriedly. If I don't, they'll finish up the lunch. Forget about Minami's portion, I'll be gravely mistaken if I think they would leave food for me.

☆

"Hm? Isn't it Yoshiii-kun?"

"Ah, Kubo-kun."

Just when I was about to reach the vending machine beside the welfare club, the guy from class A, Kubo Toshimitsu saw me and said hello to me. Was he about to go back after buying his drink?

"You look rather hurried. Why's that?"

While saying that, Kubo-kun swept his fringe subconsciously. I'm rather surprised that he would be bothered about his hairstyle.

"I lost in janken, so I have to buy drinks for everyone."

"That's a coincidence. I was about to buy a drink too."

"Uu, I see."

Isn't the canned oolong tea in his hand a drink?

"Speaking of which, I heard that class F beat class 3-A."

"As for what happened—I don't know whether it can be considered our victory, but we did enter the finals."

“Really? Either way, that’s wonderful news.”

Kubo-kun said that to me somewhat earnestly, but that made me feel guilty. This feeling’s really unbelievable.

But I got praised by Kubo-kun for not losing the match. I guess the match with class 3-A was tough. Besides, the Toko-Natsu’s pair not really one to be trifled with usually.

“What about you, Kubo-kun? Are you going to take part in the main competition? Ah, is it because that you people didn’t have anything confiscated that you weren’t really motivated?”

“No, that’s not the case. In our class, at least class rep Kirishima-san, Kudou-san and me are rather enthusiastic.”

“Eh? Is that so?”

Let’s not mention about Kirishima-san and Kudou-san, I’m rather surprised that Kubo-kun would work hard for the baseball tournament. I thought he wouldn’t be interested in such a thing.

“Because I got a lot of things confiscated as well, like pillow, bolster, bathroom curtain, anyway, a lot of things got confiscated.”

Is a pillow a necessity to a high school student nowadays?

“If that’s the case, why…”

“We lost because the opponents were too strong. And they were smart going about the batting order according to the subjects. That 4th batter was ridiculously powerful.”

“Heh, oh…their 4th batter…”

Speaking of the 4th batter, wasn’t that the pitiful person whose soul was sent to the netherworld while preparing to step up? Whether it’s the baldy-sempai whose head got blown like a rotten pomegranate or that 4th batter sempai, I really feel sorry for them.

“Sigh, this can’t be helped. I could only give up on those items. It’s my fault for bringing things that aren’t related to studies anyway.”

“Really? It’s amazing that Kubo-kun would think this way.”

As for the attack on Ironman and the raid on the staffroom, we still couldn’t get our items back. In a way, that should be rather impressive.

“No such thing. I’m a guilty person after all.”

“Eh? Really?”

“No…rather, there’s an indescribable wall…”

At that moment, Kubo-kun looked away for some reason and muttered.

Here we go again. I feel that mysterious chill that came from nowhere. Where’s this chill coming from.

“Oh yes, Yoshii-kun…”

“Hm? What is it?”

“Can you please look at this 5 yen coin?”

“Hm? I can look here…”

Kubo-kun pulled out a 5-yen coin that’s tied to a thin string. What is he trying to do?

“Yoshii-kun…”

“What is it?”

“Reach your hand here.”

“Eh? Isn’t that too sudden? Even if you want me to do something that’s like training a dog, I…”

“Ahh, nothing. Sorry. I have no intention of treating Yoshii-kun like a dog.”

I tried my best to hide my wry smile, and Kubo-kun puts the 5-yen coin with the string attached to it, seemingly muttering about something.

"…It's troubling that I couldn't get that hypnotism book from Kirishima-san…"

I didn't hear what he said clearly, but I felt that I just lost 10 years of my life.

"Ah, got to hurry! Yuuji and the rest are going to finish off the food!"

"Really? Sorry to bother you. Let's get the drink."

"Mn, sorry, Kubo-kun."

"No, don't mind it, Aki-ch—sorry, Yoshii-kun."

While talking to Kubo-kun, I felt a chill down my back as I couldn't help but tilt my head. But I still sped up to buy the drinks.

Then, after buying the drinks, I said goodbye to Kubo-kun and returned to where everyone was.

"THE RICE'S THE CULP—!"

Leaving those words behind, Hideyoshi collapsed onto the floor.

"Please have some of it♪."

"Ha, haha, ha…hahahahaha…."

"…(Trembling violently)."

As Himeji-san smiled, Yuuji and Muttsurini looked absolutely terrified as they trembled violently. I don't know what's going on, but on seeing this, my survival instincts are screaming at me to 'run away now'.

"Too bad they sold out on cola. I have to see if there's any place else selling them—"

"Oh, Akihisa! You finally came back! Forget about the cola. Just sit down first!"

“…(Nods head as if he’s mashing garlic)!”

Damn it, that Yuuji! Is he going to drag me to hell!? That bastard!

“Sorry Yuuji, I’m already a high school student. If I can’t even do my gofer job well, my value will drop a lot. Even if I have to go out of the school gate, I have to buy the cola back!”

“Nonono, I don’t really want to drink cola that much. You don’t have to work so hard. More than that, you have to sit down no matter what.”

“I can’t do that. I’ve already promised you the cola, and yet I didn’t bring it back. My sense of responsibility wouldn’t allow me to do that. So can you please let go of those arms that are grabbing my tightly?”

“Hahaha…don’t say it. I told you to sit down, you bastard!”

“Hahaha…anyway, I told you to let go, you scum!”

“Well…Akihisa-kun, aren’t you holding onto a can of cola?”

That damned Yuuji, grabbing my hand until even the hand’s cracking. He must be trying to drag me down!

“…Akihisa, you’re really indecisive.”

“WAAAHHH!”

Muttsurini suddenly kicked me on my kneecap, causing me to collapse onto the floor. The actions of of these two and the corpse of Hideyoshi lying not far away are telling me that something ominous’ about to happen. I got to get away.

“Anyway, it’s been tough on you, going out on your way to buy drinks for us. Have some rice balls first.”

“Ah, okay…”

Yuuji smiled as he passed me Himeji-san’s rice balls. I remember these should be harmless, right?

I reach out for a triangular rice ball and toss it into my mouth. It’s the ordinary one alright.

"…Che, he's alright…"

"…Lucky him."

The two guys standing beside me muttered some things that I couldn't ignore. What's going on now?

"You three, no need to hold back. Have some more."

"Ah, thank, thank you, Himeji-san."

"Is, is that so…then."

"…(Swallows saliva)."

As Himeji-san told us to eat more, everyone took a rice ball from the bento box. What's going on? I suddenly feel an ominous presence surrounding us…

"Hi, Himeji-san…"

"Yes, what is it?"

"Did you—add something special in these rice balls?"

I just ate some normal rice balls, but since Yuuji and Muttsurini are definitely terrified, and after seeing Hideyoshi's corpse, I'm definitely feeling that something's amiss.

"I didn't have much time, so I didn't add much special seasoning. But…"

"But?"

"2 of them have the special ingredients I used to make those side dishes."

At this moment, Himeji-san's bento box became a landmine.

"I prepared dessert too. Please have more."

""""Ha, haha, ha…""""

Yuuji, Muttsurini and me can only hold onto the rice balls in our hands and let out a dry laugh. However, we couldn't muster enough courage to eat it. Oh, oh yea, I should say something to drag the time on.

"We, well, Himeji-san…speaking of which…"

"Yes, what is it?"

"How did you fail when you made those side dishes?"

Did she flip the bento box over? Did she forget to bring it out? I try to ask some casual questions to quell the ominous presence of death in these rice balls—

"Eh…because I accidentally failed when balancing, even the bento box melted…"

YOSHII AKIHISA, CONVINCE YOURSELF!! THERE'S NOTHING STRANGE ABOUT THOSE WORDS! JUST TELL YOURSELF THAT!!

""""…""""

We remain silent, and remain unable to do anything else. At this moment, Muttsurini moved the hand that's holding onto the rice ball. No way. Is he going to eat it?

"…(zzztt)."

With a light sound, Muttsurini reached his hand out, taking care not to let the rice ball in his hand drop. He slowly brings it to a position where the mouth can eat.

--And at my mouth.

"…Say ahh, Akihisa."

"…"

THIS GUY'S MAKING FUN OF ME LIKE THAT! HE WOULD IGNORE HIS OWN SHAMELESSNESS AND LET A GUY LIKE ME SAY 'AHH~'… STOP JOKING AROUND! WHO CAN ALLOW HIM TO STUFF THE RICE

BALL INTO MY MOUTH LIKE THAT!?

“Hahaha, Muttsurini, stop kidding around.”

I give a gentle smile as I pretend not to notice my bad friend’s prank and turn around.

But after turning around, I see another rice ball waiting for me.

“Akihisa, here, ah~”

As that familiar and crude voice entered my ears, Yuuji uses his boney large hand to push the ball to my mouth. Hahaha…is this something that would only happen in manga, this dream like sequence of going through the back gate of a palace?

My two classmates said ‘ahh~’ as they tried to force down the hand-made rice balls into my mouth. A boy in his youthful years would definitely wish for this, right? So, if anyone wants to change places with me, please register your name, and I will hand that honor over without saying anything else. Really, I won’t regret it!

“Oi, Akihisa, you’re really shy. Just open your mouth.”

“…No need to be bothered.”

“No no, please stop joking around. This is really embarrassing!”

“No problems. Nobody else will see it, so just open your mouth obediently.”

“…Here, ah~”

“NONONONONO! I, I DON’T MEAN THAT I DON’T WANT THE RICE BALLS! WHA, WHAT I MEAN IS…PLEASE DON’T DO SUCH AN EMBARRASSING THING IN SUCH A PUBLIC PLACE!!”

GOD! WHAT AM I TO DO? WHAT SHOULD I DO TO ESCAPE FROM THIS DANGEROUS PREDICAMENT?

Facing this unprecedented crisis of fighting for the groom (the gender’s still a huge problem), I could only ask God for help. Maybe my prayer reached the Heavens as a goddess' voice reached my ears.

“Akihisa-kun.”

“Yes!”

SAVE ME, OH GODDESS-SAMA!!!

“—Ah, ahh~”

Now even Himeji-san brought the rice ball in her hand over to my mouth.

GOD, I DIDN’T MEAN IT LIKE THAT! I DON’T WANT AN INCREASE IN THE HAREM! I JUST WANT TO TURN THESE RICE BALLS INTO RICE BALLS THAT WON’T HARM THE HUMAN BODY!

“Oh my, Akihisa’s really shy. Can’t be helped then. I’ll help out and open your mouth.”

“UBOOAHHH!!”

“…(Tosses in).”

“Please, please have some.”

“What? You want some drinks? Akihisa, you really like to fawn around.”

“GOBAGOBAGOBA!!”

My mouth got opened forcefully, and I got 3 rice balls and a large gulp of drink in. No turning back now. Right now, I can only pray that none of the rice balls struck lottery. I can only pray to god’s pure heart to escape from my misery.

During the short moment while the jury's proceeding, my mind started to be filled with lots of scenes. The time when I was in kindergarten, when I entered primary school, after I entered middle school…those memories that wouldn't fade away caused my anxious emotions to calm down.

"Did that idiot…start to walk down memory lane..?"

"…We can only pray for a smooth journey for him."

GOD, DO YOU REALLY HATE ME THAT MUCH?

"UGH! WHO'LL DIE!?"

""Hm?""

I forcefully drag my last ounce of strength to keep my feet in the mortal realm. I can't die. I still have lots of things I want to do…

"How, how's the possible!? Akihisa, why, why are you still alive?"

"…Unbelievable!"

No, wait? You should be glad that I'm still alive, right?

"Because I had many opportunities to taste my sister's cooking during the entire summer vacation…"

"I see…so you were trained…"

"…It's been tough on you."

If you really think of it this way, can't you be a bit more gentle to me?

"Anyway, the rest are ordinary rice balls. Akihisa and Hideyoshi ate the special ones anyway."

"…That's too bad."

"Sorry, because I only made two special ones."

“Nonono, Himeji, you just need to focus your time and efforts in making such nice things for Akihisa. We’ll just have our own share.”

“…(Nods head violently).”

“Wha, what are you saying, Yuuji? I can do with ordinary food too! And with my sis at home, I’ve been eating my meals properly too.”

“Haha, that’s true though. If I make Sakamoto-kun a special bento, Shouko-chan may get angry.”

“Ah, that’s right.”

“…I agree.”

After knowing that the existence of the terrifying rice balls that would harm life is gone, the atmosphere regained its calm and peacefulness. Lunchtime should be like that.

“You’re rather lucky, Yuuji.”

“Ah? What are you talking about?”

“Because you wanted to feed me just now and even made an ‘ahh’, didn’t you? I don’t know how Kirishima-san will punish you once she saw that.”

Even though we’re guys.

“Ohh, you’re talking about that. Well…you may be right. Recently, even though I’ve been emphasizing to her that ‘he’s a guy’, she just wouldn’t listen. If she saw that just now, I really wouldn’t know what to do.”

“Eh? You’re talking about Shouko-chan? She just walked in front of us.”

“…………Really?”

“Yes.”

God will pass the same punishment to fools. Most likely, Muttsurini would have the same fate too.

“Goodbye Yuuji. It’s been an honor to have a last meal with you.”

“…Let’s do something stupid in our next life.”

“Hold on, both of you. Don’t say goodbye to me so painlessly.”

He just ate what a girl made and even made an ‘ahh~’. There’s almost no chance of Yuuji surviving.

“Really, Akihisa-kun, Tsuchiya-kun, you’re joking too much! Shouko-chan wasn’t that angry!”

“No, that woman will send me to hell because of that.”

Regrettably, I could only agree with Yuuji.

“Why are you saying that too, Sakamoto-kun? That’s not true! If Shouko-chan’s really angry, she would step up to deal with you.”

What Himeji-san just said was weird. I hope she realized what she just said.

“Speaking of which, that’s weird. It seems like Kirishima-san’s slightly different from usual.”

“…(Nods head)”

If she didn’t see that, okay, but she did see it, and she didn’t punish Yuuji. That’s not like her at all. Is she...waiting for the shocking judgment like that seaside trip? No, that’s too weird as well…

“Uu…she probably realized that there’s no point in monitoring my every movement. That’s a nice change of pace.”

Yuuji didn’t seem to mind as he put the remaining rice balls into his mouth.

“AH! When did you…”

Before I noticed it, Minami’s sandwiches were finished. Both of them were delicious (except for the special killer rice balls Himeji-san made), yet they were finished up.

"Ahh, sorry. I ate more as it was too good."

"Fufu, I'm really happy to hear you say that."

Himeji-san smiled happily as she keeps the empty bento box. Food that Himeji-san makes that are safe to eat are really precious, yet they were eaten up so fast…

"Don't look so disappointed, Akihisa-kun. I prepared dessert too."

"Where are you going, Akihisa?"

"...I'll taze you if you dare run away."

"No, that's not it. I just want to buy drinks!"

My hands got held hard, and there's a taser poking at me on the back. The, these two guys…they're using me as a shield just to let themselves live longer?

"My house got some special fruit, so I brought it to school."

Himeji-san pulled out another bento box with dessert in it. Eh? Fruit? If that's the case, it should be something edible.

"I see. I'll have some then."

"Special fruit? I'm looking forward to it now that you say that."

"…What is it?"

"Yes, the fruit is—"

Himeji-san removes the lid of the bento box and shows us what's inside.

"—Pomegranate!"

The fruit that's waiting silently in the bento box is way too similar to the summoned beast of that baldy-sempai who went to the netherworld.

☆

“And now, we’ll have the first year cheerleading competition. All first years, please—”

The audio broadcast could be heard. The first event everyone was looking forward to is the cheerleading competition everyone’s looking forward to. The first years are all dressed in different colored clothing as they started to perform with the music.

I check out the kouhais’ performances with my eyes as I prepare for our turn.

“It’s been a long time since I wore a collared uniform…maybe since middle school.”

“Huh? Akihisa, your school uses collared uniforms?”

“…Me too.”

“Same here.”

“Heh~ Hideyoshi, you wore a sailor uniform, right?”

“Akihisa, it seems like we’re not on the same wavelength here.”

Everyone’s holding onto the clothes they were preparing to change into as we chat leisurely. At this moment, Minami came walking here with a cheerleader outfit. She looked like there’s a problem that’s hard to deal with. What happened?

Having these doubts, I see her walk to Hideyoshi as she give an ever serious look.

“Oi, Kinoshita..”

“I don’t want.”

“Uu…I haven’t said anything yet.”

It’s rare for Hideyoshi to answer Minami so coldly like that. What is Minami trying to ask him?

“Don’t say that. Look, isn’t this clothing really cute?”

“It’s because it’s cute that I don’t want it.”

Hideyoshi tilted his head aside as if he’s deliberately ignoring the cheerleader outfit Minami showed him.

“No matter how you ask me, I won’t agree to the cheerleading. I want to join the guys side!”

“There’s too many on the support side, but we only have 2 people. That’s really troubling, so please?”

Minami didn’t give up. It seems that she really wants Hideyoshi to take part in the cheerleading, but why? Minami’s actions really puzzle me.

“Ah, Minami-chan! There’s almost no time! Hurry up and change.”

Dressed in cheerleader outfit, Himeji-san came running here.

DOING, DOING, DOING…Himeji-san seemed to be bouncing here. It’s rare for Himeji-san to do something big, and now she looks really active—that’s right, she’s giving off a really vibrant look.

“…(Zzzzsst).”

I didn’t see it myself, but I can feel Muttsurini beside me drawing a cross in front of his chest.

So I immediately look down to hide the blushing look that’s rising up in me. This is…REALLY SHOCKING!!!

“That’s why I don’t want to take part in the cheerleading with her! Look at her bouncing so hard! We have to jump later! There’ll be a commotion!”

“Even if you say that, I’m a guy. I don’t want to be some cheerleader.”

As Hideyoshi and Minami continued to budge, it’s a little late, but Muttsurini collapsed on the floor due to overwhelming nosebleed. That’s too dangerous. If I looked away just a bit later, I would be in Valhalla now.

“Oh yeah, if Minami’s to take part in cheerleading with Himeji-san, there will be a lot of parts being used for comparison…”

“And she’s really spinning hard! I feel that she’s deliberately standing beside me just to bully me!”

I see. So Minami’s really bothered about what people have and what people don’t have…so that’s why she wanted to get Hideyoshi in. At least the mental trauma would be a bit less. Minami really has it tough, there’s a lot of things to worry about…but I think she really doesn’t need to think that way, because Minami’s rather cute herself.

“Please Hideyoshi, just grant her request and take part in the cheerleading. I think you'd be rather cute if you wear the cheerleading outfit, Hideyoshi.”

“I don’t want.”

“But isn’t it better to wear a cheerleading outfit than to be forced to wrap a bandage around your chest?”

“That, that’s because if I don’t, you guys would complain to the disciplinary committee! That’s why I had to wear it!”

Of course. If Hideyoshi just showed his chest like that, they might even send the police in to arrest him and put on the bandages. That’s the correct call.

“Well, Akihisa-kun…what is Minami-chan asking Kinoshita-kun to do?”

Standing in front of me, Himeji-san sees Minami and Hideyoshi in stalemate, and couldn’t help but ask that.

Eh, about that…

“Why aren’t you willing? Isn’t this cute?”

“That’s because it’s cute! I’m a man! I don’t want to wear cute clothes!”

“Kinoshita, calm down and listen to me—”

“What is it?”

“Actually, those who wear cheerleader clothes…are rather manly!”

“I say…are you treating me as an idiot on Akihisa’s level!?”

“Minami’s trying to get Hideyoshi to take part in the cheerleading.”

I didn’t mention the specifics, but at least I’m not lying.

“Ohh…so she wants Kinoshita-kun to take part in the performance as well…but why?”

“Ahaha…I guess Minami feels that we have too few girls in our class?”

“Ah, I see.”

PA! Himeji-san suddenly clapped her hands in understanding, and then—

“Well, if there’re too few girls…”

“Hold on, Himeji-san, why are you taking out another cheerleading uniform and staring at me with that expression?

I WON’T WEAR IT! I WON’T WEAR THAT SORT OF THING NO MATTER WHAT ANYONE SAYS!!

“Hahaha, Akihisa. Isn’t this good? I was worried that we have too few girls in class as well. It would look better if you take part.”

“Well, Sakamoto-kun…if you’re wearing…”

“HOLD ON, HIMEJI! WHY ARE YOU TAKING OUT ANOTHER UNIFORM AND LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT!?”

What can we do? I think Himeji-san’s brain got some terrible illness recently.

This will be bad if this keeps up. Better act as if nothing happened and change the topic.

“Oh ya, Himeji-san…”

“Yes, what is it, Akihisa-kun?”

I sounded really scared. Seeing Himeji-san who wouldn’t keep the cheerleading outfit no matter what, I could only tremble and point at her as I finish saying.

“I heard that you were really serious when practicing in this cheerleading performance.”

“Ah, not, I wasn’t really that serious…”

Himeji-san’s already someone who would work hard, but unexpectedly, she would work so hard to do something she’s not good at. That’s really amazing.

“But the way you’re seriously practicing really made Shimada worry. Don’t work yourself too much. The cheerleading competition’s just a side event, it doesn’t have anything to do with sports ranking.”

Yuuji added on to what I said. I can imagine why Minami would be so worried… there’s a lot to this…

“Yes, I did try to check my body condition, but—”

“But what?”

Saying till here, Himeji-san smiled.

How should I say this? I feel that Himeji-san’s really different from before. Until a while back, she would be troubled because she didn’t know how to play baseball, but now, she wouldn’t give that feeling any more. Actually, I’m rather happy about that.

“Ah, Mn! Of course!”

The reason Himeji-san changed so much wasn’t because class A that focuses so much on studying changed her, but that she stayed in class F. Thinking till here, I can’t help but feel pro—

“Okay, please cheer for me—and please wear this!”

Let me correct myself. She definitely changed in a bad way. Himeji-san really needs an environment like class A.

Just when I was about to lecture Himeji-san on the clothing guys should be wearing—

“Eh? Isn’t that Kirishima-san?”

That’s rare. That’s really rare. Kirishima-san’s here, yet she didn’t seem to notice Yuuji’s presence as she walked on. What’s going on? It seemed like she’s completely lethargic.

“Oh, that’s true. What’s wrong, Shouko?”

“…Ah…Yuuji…”

Even though Yuuji talked to her, she just gave a lifeless response. What’s wrong? She really looked lifeless.

“…Our class…lost the baseball game…”

“Yeah, I know that.”

We weren’t present, but we know that class 2-A that was led by Kirishima-san lost the match. Is that the reason why Kirishima-san was so listless?

“But we beat class 3-A, so I took revenge for you.”

“…But the thing that got confiscated from me won’t come back again…”

Kirishima-san muttered painfully.

The confiscated thing she mentioned should be the marriage certificate Yuuji mentioned before, right? I see, so Kirishima-san wanted to win the baseball tournament to get that back from the teachers. No wonder she felt so sad about losing the match.

“The confiscated items again? Really, you…”

Yuuji revealed a reluctant look and scratches his head. He says,

“…I wanted to keep it until the marriage ceremony….”

On hearing Kirishima-san say that hoarsely—

“STOP KIDDING AROUND! EVEN IF THAT WASN’T CONFISCATED, I’D THROW IT AWAY IF I FOUND IT!!”

Yuuji still said that in a crude manner.

“…Eh…”

Kirishima-san looked stunned as she looked up, but Yuuji didn’t care about her response at all as he continued on in a self-centered manner.

“’WHAT’S WITH THAT ‘EH’? ISN’T IT THAT THING THAT GOT CONFISCATED? IS THERE A NEED TO BE SHOCKED!?”

“…You say…that thing…”

“BEING ALL DEJECTED BECAUSE YOU LOST THAT THING, NO WONDER YOU LOST TO THAT TOKO-NATSU GROUP—“

At this moment—

“…uu!”

—PAAAA

The crisp slapping sound rang in front of us.

"…That's not…something stupid!"

Kirishima-san cried as she bit her lower lip.

Eh? What's…the situation now.

"ONLY YUUJI! I WON'T ALLOW YUUJI TO SAY THIS!"

The pitiful cry that nearly rocked my mind caused me to close my eyes inadvertently—the moment I opened my eyes, Kirishima-san turned and walked away.

""""…""""

Yuuji, Himeji-san and I are rooted to the spot. What? What just happened?

"I, I'll go check out Shouko-chan!"

Being the fastest to recover, Himeji-san frantically ran to Kirishima-san.

Yuuji and I still don't understand what's going on and can only stare at each other blankly.

After a while, Yuuji finally recovered from his shock.

"…That Shouko…damn it…"

That was a low bellow from the deepest part of his abdomen.

"That Shouko…saying that it's 'not something stupid'. A MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE WITHOUT MY OWN CONSENT ISN'T ANYTHING BUT STUPID!!!"

Yuuji couldn't help but roar out as he looked up to the skies. Even though he often got abused by Kirishima-san, it seemed that he stepped on a landmine this time, and Yuuji couldn't forgive this.

"SHE DOESN'T WANT ME TO SAY THIS!? I'M THE ONE WITH THE BIGGEST PRIVILEGE TO SAY THIS! I NEVER PROMISED HER

ANYWAY! OF COURSE I WOULD SAY THOSE THINGS TO HER!!”

He’s really fuming. Yuuji’s really angry now. If there’s a table or some shelf nearby, he would be kicking it to vent his own frustrations now.

“Uu…Yuuji’s right. No matter how important that thing is to Kirishima-san, it’s really troubling that she would be angry about a marriage certificate without your consent..”

“THAT’S RIGHT! IF SHE FELT THAT ‘SOMETHING STUPID’ IS BAD ENOUGH, I CAN CALL IT ‘USELESS TRASH!’ THAT IDIOT!!”

MIZUKI HIMEJI

Seems like Yuuji really can’t calm down now. I can understand somewhat. To me, what Kirishima-san did was really unreasonable, and since Yuuji’s the party involved, it’s to be expected that he would be that angry.

Standing in front of Yuuji who’s roaring away, I can only carry the cheerleader outfit that was thrown on me and sigh. Well, that’s really troublesome…

“So how about this, Kinoshita? I got an idea! I’ll wear the collared uniform and you wear the cheerleader outfit—”

“That doesn’t solve anything for me!!”

From far away, Minami and Hideyoshi continued their argument, not noticing our situation here.

On a side note, Hideyoshi finally ended up wearing a collared outfit with a bandage around his chest and ponpons in his hands as he danced with Himeji-san and Minami. Everyone in the audience roared in approval, and the atmosphere was really intense.

The Seventh Question

Please choose the correct element symbol corresponding to the question, and write down the correct name of the element.

‘Mn O S Na I Pb Ne’

1. Has a crystal-lattice structure. It will react strongly with water to form a yellowish flame.
2. Has a boiling point of 184.26 degrees Celsius and melting point of 113.75 degrees Celsius. It reacts with Starch to form a blue compound.
3. Has a relative atomic mass of 54. The oxide material is commonly used as a catalyst to decompose oxides into oxygen and water.
4. A rare element. It is in the second period. It can be liquefied and used as a refrigerant.[5]

Himeji Mizuki's answer

"1--Na (Sodium), 2--I (Iodine), 3--Mn (Manganese), 4--Ne (Neon)"

Teacher's comment

Correct answer. Once you can memorize all these names of the elements, you can explain the reactions of each element. So you have to memorize the basics.

Shimada Minami's Answer

"I don't want to write."

HIDEYOSHI KINOSHITA

Teacher's Comment

What's wrong? I'm really sad that you don't want to take the test. Sensei always thought that Shimada-san is a hardworking girl. I'm disappointed that you aren't willing to answer the question. I can understand if you don't know the answer, but that isn't an excuse. Before we talk about studying, you have a big problem with your attitude. If you don't correct this now, it will be tough on you when you go out into society.

Tsuchiya Kouta's Answer

"1--Na ( ), 2--I (), 3--Mn (), 4--Ne ()" [6]

Teacher's Comment

I really have to apologize to Shimada-san.

Even though it’s just an activity on the sports meet schedule, the most important event in the sports meet to us is the baseball tournament. Before starting the finals that involve life and death, we’re all gathered at the F class bench near 1st base as we all check our batting arrangements.

“So Kinoshita’s third. The first subject’s Chemistry, right?”

“Mn. My other subjects are rather bad, but this batting order is good for me if it’s Chemistry.”

“My Chemistry’s one of my better subjects too. The opponents are of that level, so we have to compete with them using the subjects we’re good at.”

“Me too. World history and English were too difficult. I couldn’t even compete with others.”

This time, our opponents are the teachers’ team. Since they’re somewhat old, their athletic ability and decision making should have decreased quite a lot, but their scores alone make them our strongest opponents. It wouldn’t be overzealous of us to check our defensive alignments and make sure what we will do later.

“Is it really okay for Yuuji to take the eighth batter?”

“…My English and world history are somewhat manageable.”

Yuuji coldly responded. It seems like he’s not too happy at the moment, maybe he’s feeling down.

“Really…it can’t be helped that Yuuji would be so angry, but we can’t involve these two together.”

I try to calm Yuuji down for the next match. At this moment, I feel someone tugging at my sleeve. Who is it?

(Well, Akihisa-kun…)

(Hm? Himeji-san? What’s wrong?)

(When Akihisa-kun said that it couldn’t be helped, is it because you felt that it’s weird for Sakamoto-kun to be so angry?)

Himeji-san kept her voice to the softest possible in order not to let Yuuji hear it.

Even if she asks me if I feel this way, I…

(Not really. It’s just that from all I know, even when Kirishima-san got so angry at Yuuji, it couldn’t change anything…)

Basically, I’m leaning towards Kirishima-san’s side instead of Yuuji’s side, but this just can’t be settled like that.

(I think Sakamoto-kun just argued back like that because Shouko-chan said that, so it’s not really all Sakamoto-kun’s fault, but…)

Himeji-san’s tone had at little sadness in it.

(But when he calms down, I really hope that Sakamoto-kun will apologize to Shouko-chan properly, or else Shouko-chan will be feeling pitiful.)

Saying this, Himeji-san looked down.

It seems that Himeji-san is completely standing on Kirishima-san’s side, but I can understand Yuuji’s feelings… Uu… are the guys’ pattern of thought different from girls in this situation?

“Now, we’ll be beginning the teachers-vs-students baseball meet, all students, please assemble in a straight line.”

The refereeing teacher spoke up.

“Oi, stop chit-chatting over there. Time to go, Akihisa.”

“Ah, I’m coming over.”

Anyway, we’ll leave this aside for now, everyone, including the bench players went over to the middle of the sports arena as we line up. The teachers also walk over casually from 3rd base, and line up against up.

“MATCH BEGIN!”

“““Please take care of us!”””

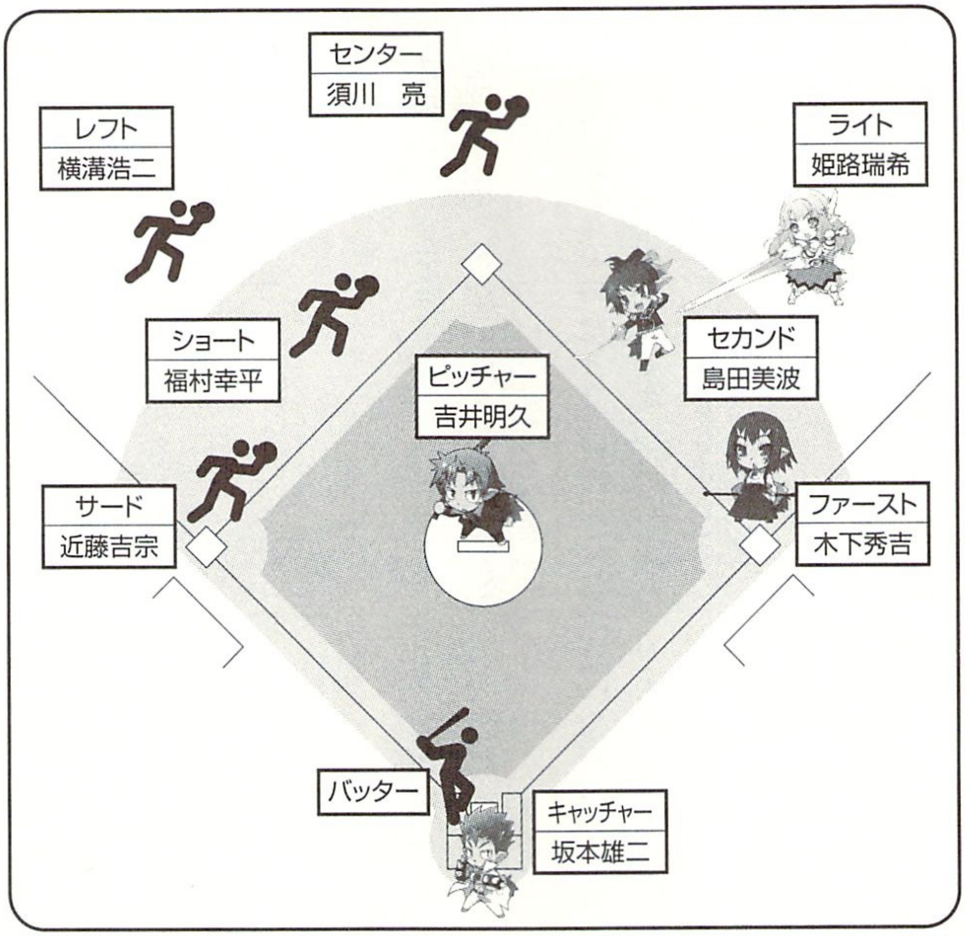
After bowing, we head to our defensive positions.

In this match, we’ll be pitching first and batting later, so I stood on the pitcher’s mound. The first subject should be Chemistry. I’m the pitcher, and Yuuji’s still the catcher.

1. First batter: 3rd baseman Kondou Yoshimune
2. Second batter: Left fielder Yokomizo Koji
3. Third batter: 1st baseman Kinoshita Hideyoshi
4. Fourth batter: 2nd baseman Shimada Minami
5. Fifth batter: Center fielder Sugawa Ryo
6. Sixth batter: Shortstop Fukumura Kohei
7. Seventh batter: Pitcher Yoshii Akihisa
8. Eighth batter: Catcher Sakamoto Yuuji
9. Ninth batter: Right fielder Himeji Mizuki

Bench players: Kimishima Hiroshi and Tsuchiya Kouta (Muttsurini)

決勝戦　教師チーム戦　Fクラス　スターティングメンバー


センター
須川　亮
レフト
横溝浩二
ライト
姫路瑞希
ショート
福村幸平
セカンド
島田美波
ピッチャー
吉井明久
サード
近藤吉宗
ファースト
木下秀吉
バッター
キャッチャー
坂本雄二

打順	
1番	近藤吉宗
2番	横溝浩二
3番	木下秀吉
4番	島田美波
5番	須川　亮
6番	福村幸平
7番	吉井明久
8番	坂本雄二
9番	姫路瑞希

ベンチ	
補欠	土屋康太（ムッツリーニ） 君島　博

システム管理者：藤堂カヲル

After calling out my summoned beast, I just need to wait for the opponent to step up.

“Baseball, huh... Haven't played it for over 20 years—summon.”

The first batter of the teachers’ team, Fuse-sensei entered the batter’s box and summoned his summoned beast.

Chemistry Teacher, Fuse Fumihiro, Chemistry, 501 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

Though it’s to be expected, isn’t this difference in scores too huge! If he hits it, the ball I pitched will be sent flying out of the park.

I’m facing such a strong opponent at the beginning. Now what do I do…

I stand on the pitcher’s mound and wait for Yuuji’s instruction. We can't use curveballs, so Yuuji could only instruct me with the ball direction and speed.

(Outside corner, low, slow ball.)

As the teachers were running all the events of the sports meet, they only came over to play with us when it’s time for the match. In other words, these teachers are having their first match. Yuuji guessed that they would let the ball through first, so this is to be expected.

I nod my head slightly and pitch the first ball. Outside corner, low and slow ball…!

“STRIKE!”

Fuse-sensei didn’t move at all. As expected, he’s watching carefully. They themselves haven’t played much baseball, so it’s expected that it he would be cautious.

(Inside corner, high, slow ball)

Yuuji next instructed a ball. Is he trying to use a ball to see how the opponent will react?

I swing my arm wide and pitch the 2nd ball.

"…"

"BALL!"

Fuse-sensei seemed to move a bit, but he didn't swing the bat. This means that it's one ball one strike.

(Low inside corner, fastball.)

It's the 3rd pitch now, and the opponent should be swinging now. I have to be very careful with this pitch.

I swing my arm wide and pitch the ball with all I got. Eat this, Fuse-sensei! This is my, our F class' full power—!

"Where are you pitching this ball to?"

Damn it, I used too much force.

In this situation where the ball would normally be hit, my pitch went straight to the strike zone in a dangerous matter.

"U!? Oh, oh my…"

On seeing this ball, Fuse-sensei seemed to lose his balance for some reason as he swung the bat out. That's strange? What just happened?

The ball had grazed the bat and immediately felt up into the sky. I'm impressed that there was so much power with just a simple graze, but unfortunately, this ball was hit too poorly.

“OUT!”

In the end, the ball got hit into the air and finally reached the left fielder’s glove. We managed to eliminate the first batter safely. That lack of control scared me, but it’s a good thing that it’s under control.

“Yare yare…I got too anxious because the ball was too good…”

Fuse-sensei chuckled wryly as he returned back to the bench. I see, since the ball was pitched better than what he expected, he got shocked and panicked. It may be a coincidence, but to be able to deal with a Chemistry teacher in the subject of Chemistry is a strong start for us.

“I’ll be the next batter. Summon.”

This time, it’s a young man’s voice. This isn’t the voice of Takeuchi-sensei who usually teaches our class, but rather, the other modern literature teacher of year 2, Terai-sensei.

Modern Literature Teacher, Terai Shinsuke, Chemistry, 211 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

211 points? Since he’s the teacher in charge of Modern Literature, he’s not really that good in Chemistry, I guess. Well, but at least his grades are in class A level.

(Keep it low as possible, fastball.)

I nod my head at Yuuji’s comment, making sure not to throw a wild pitch. The ball path—locked on. How about this?

“…Ha!”

KAN! With a blunt impact sound, the ball was hit low as it quickly grazed pass the ground. It went through the hole between first and second base. Ku...! He took action so quickly…!

“I thought I could hit the center of the ball. Looks like it’s really different from playing it live.”

Terai-sensei gave a wry smile after standing on first base. Speaking of which, I heard that Terai-sensei once played baseball in school…maybe it would have been better to give a ball?

Right now, it’s one man out, one man on first base, and the third batter who’ll come up is—

“Let’s have a good game.”

The talented woman who’s our level head, Takahashi Yoko-sensei, stepped up. Today, she’s not wearing the speck-free suit, but a sports attire that’s suitable for this event. This makes her look even more kind and approachable.

“Please hold back, Yoshii-kun—summon.”

Takahashi-sensei normally wouldn’t initiate a conversation with us, so this is a rare and valuable experience. Speaking of which, the last time we spoke to each other was during the 2nd year guys peeping incident. Thinking about this, I feel that having this event to improve the relationship between students and teachers is actually—SOMEBODY SAVE ME!!!

Level head, Takahashi Yoko, Chemistry, 801 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, Chemistry, 57 points.

““““GUHOOO!!!””””

I didn’t need to look back to tell that everyone in their defensive positions all cried out in amazement when they saw the score. 800 points!! What’s with this person? Why is her score even higher than that of a teacher in charge of Chemistry!!

(We can’t fight it out with her. Send her on base.)

Yuuji used his eyes to indicate that I send her on base. Of course, I would agree with his view. How can I win against someone with such a terrifying score using my own score? It can’t be helped that we have to send her on base. I see, so that’s how it is. All our opponents up till now probably felt the same way when they faced Himeji-san—hm?

“That’s strange? What’s going on…”

Takahasi-sensei’s summoned beast that was standing in the batter’s box seemed to be doing something wrong. I know she looks clumsy, but it’s not just that… ah! She mixed up the way she should be holding the bat. The left and right hands are both placed wrongly. In that case…

(Let’s fight it out, Yuuji. It seems that Takahashi-sensei doesn’t really know how to play baseball.)

I told Yuuji to check Takahashi-sensei’s hands with my eyes. After being prompted by me, Yuuji realized that Takahashi-sensei placed her hands wrongly, and immediately got ready to catch as he positions the glove.

“Takahashi-sensei, your hands are positioned wrongly. You can’t hit well like this.”

“Ahh, that’s right…thank you for reminding me, Nishimura-sensei.”

Ready to get on, Ironman reminded Takahashi-sensei, and she immediately put her hands properly. Right now, she’s holding the bat correctly, but now that confirms our guess that Takahashi-sensei can’t play baseball. If that’s the case, it’s not impossible to get her out.

(Outside corner, high, fastball.)

Noticing the position and manner that Takahashi-sensei’s holding the bat, Yuuji slightly adjusted the position of the glove. Bait her with a ball…I think she can't play baseball well, so maybe it's a good idea to let her swing and miss.

I follow Yuuji's instruction and get ready to pitch. As I pitch

"Let me see, like this?"

Takahashi-sensei suddenly changed her posture and holds her bat again.

"STRIKE!"

As I deliberately pitched the ball out of the strike zone, Takahashi-sensei didn't hit the ball as it flew directly into Yuuji's glove. Is she trying to bunt…? Un…

(Let her bunt if she wants to. We can add another out.)

Yuuji threw the ball back and gave me this instruction. Yuuji's right. If Takahashi-sensei wants to bunt to advance the runner, we can add another out. The reason's simple. The next batter will be the 4th batter, and it will be the teacher with the highest score. We will send him on base no matter what. In other words, the runner on first base will go to second base no matter what. With one person out, it's better for us to let her do a sacrifice.

I ready myself and pitch the ball hard. Really, was sensei too naïve? Bunting in this situation, it's like she's giving herself up in this situation. If I think about it carefully—

"No wait! That's not how it is!"

The opponent doesn't even know how to play baseball, and is one of the teachers! How can she be so naïve to let us see through it! If even I can sense this, she would notice it too…!

But it was too late when I realized this. Before I knew it, the ball that left my fingers reached the front of the bat.

"Over here, like this…"

DONK! The forceful hit rang in my ears. Takahashi-sensei didn't change her bunting position, however—

"A Drag-Bunt?"

A bunt is a bunt, but this is a drag bunt. It's different from a sacrifice bunt. This is to score. Damn it! So that was her aim!

The ball that got hit flew low and passed by me and the 3rd baseman. Not good!

Just when I was about to give up, god gave us timely reinforcements.

"Leave it to me!"

"Fukumura-kun!? Thank goodness!"

The flight of the ball flew directly to the shortstop Fukumura-kun.

Fukumura-kun put the glove in front of him as he lowered his body to grab this body. Now, Fukumura-kun just need to catch the ball and throw to 1st base.

"GUAAAAHHHHH!!!!"

"""HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE!!!"""

Fukumura-kun's summoned beast got blown away together with him.

Hold, hold on a minute! What's the situation now! That was just a normal bunt! It didn't hit the center. How does it have such tremendous power to send a summoned beast flying as well!

"TAKAHASHI-SENSEI, YOU CAN TAKE SECOND BASE IN THIS SITUATION!"

Someone among the teachers shouted out. Fukumura-kun's summoned beast and the ball got knocked into center field, and even rolled a few times. Damn it, Takahashi-sensei's going to take second base!

"Second base? I got it."

Takahashi-sensei nodded her head calmly.

And then, her summoned beast ran to second base, directly at second base, even past the pitcher’s mound I’m standing on.

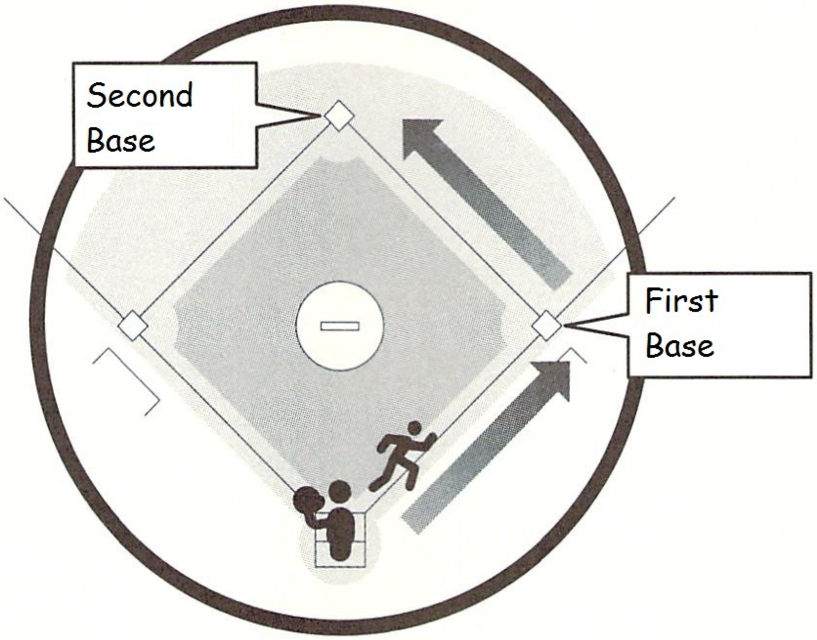
““““……Ha?””””

Including Terai-sensei on the base, everyone present widened their eyes.

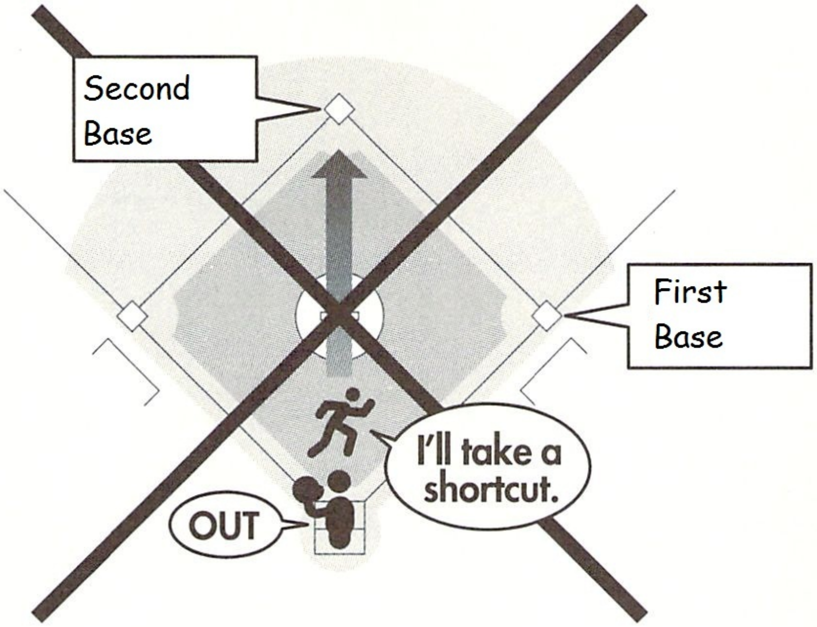
“…Batter out.”

The umpire declared that Takahashi-sensei was out. The rules of baseball stipulates that the baserunner can only run in the directed path, and can’t skip first base before running to second base. It seems that Takahashi-sensei doesn’t understand these rules at all.

○ The Correct Way of Heading to Second Base.


Second Base
First Base

× The Wrong Way of Heading to Second Base


Second Base
First Base
I'll take a shortcut.
OUT

“Takahashi-sensei…you’re out, please return to the bench…”

“Why’s that?”

“Anyway, that’s the case…”

The eyes hidden behind the glasses narrowed, but Takahashi-sensei’s summoned beast could only return back to her own camp. Whether it’s Himeji-san or Takahashi-sensei…they can study, but why don’t they understand the rules of sports…

“Well…sensei, you’re tagged out.”

“Eh?”

Unknowingly, Terai-sensei, who was standing blankly behind first and second base, got tagged out. While everyone was still stunned, Sugawa-kun picked the rolling ball up to do a terrific defensive play, but…what’s with this complete lack of enthusiasm?

Level head, Takahashi Yoko, Chemistry, 801 points

Vs

Class F, Fukumura Kohei, Chemistry, DEAD.

On a side note, Fukumura-kun’s summoned beast got called back to the Lord.

☆

“I'm going then.”

“We'll leave the rest to you, Kondou-kun.”

“Leave it to me. I'll give a big one.”

Our first batter here is Kondou-kun, who stood in position. This half-inning will be played with Chemistry as the subject. The pitcher's Fuse-sensei, and Ironman's the catcher. As for Takahashi-sensei, the level head is guarding right field. They can't let her pitch anyone. Takahashi-sensei's kindness now would be like our Himeji-san here.

“Maybe we might have a chance if the ball flies to right outfield.”

I mentioned it to Yuuji beside me. If the ball flew to Takahashi-sensei, maybe we can expect her to make an error.

“Ahh, maybe.”

Yuuji's response's as cold as ever. It seems that his mood hasn't improved.

“How will this match end up...”

I couldn't help but mutter.

According to the plan--

“STRIKE!'”

--I just heard a bit,--

“STRIKE TWO!”

--The chances of us winning should be--

“STRIKE THREE! STRIKEOUT!”

--decided at the final stage. To Yuuji--

“STRIKE!”

--Our attacks now--

“STRIKE TWO!”

--Aren't worth looking forward to.--

“STRIKE THREE! STRIKEOUT!”

--But no matter what--

“STRIKE!”

--Since our class' on the offense--

“'STRIKE TWO!”

--We should cheer them.

“STRIKE THREE! STRIKEOUT!”

Oh, time to defend. Let's do our best.

Kondou-kun, Yokomizo-kun and Hideyoshi got struck out with three strikes each. Compared to the last half-inning, our attack seemed to end so suddenly...

F class again arrived on the field as we all stand at our designated defensive alignments. In this inning, the subject tested will be world history, and I'll be the batter. Ever since the last summoning tournament, Japanese history and world history have become my specialities somewhat. I think I should be able to do well in this inning.

“Alright, come on! I won't let you score that easily.”

I stood on the pitcher's mound and wait for the next batter. Alright, who's next?

“You really can talk big, Yoshii.”

I, Ironman...what's going on? My hot-bloodedness seemed to subside in an instant....ah, this can't be helped. Ironman's most terrifying aspect isn't his scores, but his athletic ability. Besides, since he's teaching us class F, how can his brain be--

Remedial Teacher, Nishimura Sochi, World History, 741 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, 121 points.

(Send him on base.)

(OK, Yuuji.)

I can tell what Yuuji's thinking without seeing it. Facing such a monster, only a fool would ask for a proper showdown.

Yuuji positioned the glove outside the strikezone. Eh? He's not getting up? Is he thinking of letting Ironman think that it would be a foul ball but want me to throw a strike? Or is he just lazy to get up?

Though I have lots of question marks above my head, I still pitched the ball according to where Yuuji is.

After the ball got pitched, Ironman frowned, but he didn't swing at the first pitch.

“BALL!”

As the umpire declared it, Yuuji silently pitched the ball to me.

Seeing him like that, Ironman muttered in a coarse voice.

“...Was that you instruction, Sakamoto?”

“That's right. What's wrong with it.”

After answering Ironman, Yuuji put the glove at the same area again.

“I see...”

Ironman muttered unhappily as he again looked at me. What is Ironman trying to say? Is he going to scold us for sending him on base?

“I thought that you guys just couldn't study, but at least you knew what to do in this situation...looks like I have to educate you.”

“Eh? What are you saying? Aren't we just sending you on base? It's common in the game. Are you thinking about telling us off because of this?”

“No, I'm not talking about sending me onto base...listen up, Sakamoto, as a teacher, I have something to tell you.”

Ignoring what Yuuji and Ironman were saying, I pitched the ball at where Yuuji positions his glove. I just need to send him on base anyway. It doesn't matter whether they're chit-chatting, I'll just pitch anyway.

“--NO MATTER WHAT, IF YOU WANT TO DO IT, MAKE SURE YOU FINISH THE JOB!”

KLANG!! With a crisp batting sound, the ball that was flying at the glove disappeared. How is that possible? Did Ironman just hit a ball?

In the blink of an eye, the ball disappeared from my eyes. My motion senses couldn't catch up to that ball. That ball that was hit isn't in the summoning field now.

“HO...HOMERUN!!!”

“…Humph.”

Ironman’s summoned beast casually stepped through all the bases. We were careless…! If we want to send the opponent on base, I should have called Yuuji to stand up even if it’s troublesome and throw it at a place the bat can’t possibly hit…!

“Ku…”

While standing on the pitcher’s mound, I can clearly heard Yuuji bite his lip and looking really troubled. Really, this isn’t like him. There was no need for Ironman to lecture him; Yuuji’s a guy who wouldn’t be careless when it’s time to be careless, but he actually performed poorly in this situation. This isn’t the Yuuji I know.

Looking at this, I have to speak up.

"Time!"

I immediately asked the umpire for a timeout, and get off the pitcher's mound as I head to Yuuji.

"…What now, Akihisa? You're going to scold me now?"

Yuuji glared at me unhappily and spoke up before me.

"Mn, I guess."

"Keh, you don't have to say it. I know that."

Yuuji replied me with a bad tone.

It seems that Yuuji himself understands that he wasn't focusing on this match. When we had to send Ironman on base, or when facing Takahashi-sensei, the normal Yuuji would have noticed that Takahashi-sensei held the bat wrongly earlier than me, and he would have deduced that she was going for a drag bunt. How can a guy who's always thinking not notice it when even I noticed it?

"I won't nag on if you understand. We're facing an opponent that you can't just beat by just thinking wildly."

"Enough nagging. Okay, get back onto the pitcher's mound when you're done. The match's still on."

After saying that, I didn't want to talk any more as I turn and return back to my defensive position.

But even though I said so,

"I told him to concentrate, but it can't be helped that Yuuji is so angry…"

To be honest, I felt that I just gave him one huge problem.

Yare yare…the way that guy is now, it's unlikely that we can win this match…

"PLAY!!"

Once I returned back to the pitcher’s mound, the umpire declared that the match would continue.

Right now, there’s nobody out and no baserunner on base. Now, we’re facing the 5th batter, which is Ooshima-sensei, the teacher in charge of Health and Physical Education.

“So we’re playing baseball with summoned beasts against the students instead of having lessons…summon.”

Health Education Teacher, Ooshima Takeshi, World History, 233 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, 121 points.

This period would mostly be held outdoors, and Health Ed’s the only lesson we would stay in class. But what’s with such a score? Forget about the athletic ability first, we must have lots of guts if we want to face him.

(Inside corner, lower, fastball.)

Yuuji’s instruction was a inside pitch that’s normally harder to hit, and keeping it low will prevent the long ball. This may seem passive, but it can’t be helped.

I get ready as my eyes watch Yuuji’s glove. I then pitch the first ball.

KLANG

“FOUL!”

The ball that got hit passed by 3rd base and went to the patch of grass in the corner of the sports hall. Swinging the bat like that without much thought, Ooshima-sensei’s really into it.

“I see. So it’s different from swinging it personally.”

Ooshima-sensei muttered softly. It’s a good thing that the teachers were assembled together at the last minute. If this were the second match when they got warmed up, that’ll be a really scary thought.

After receiving the ball, I silently wait for the instruction of the second pitch from Yuuji.

(Inside corner, high.)

Another inside ball. Yuuji must be preparing to use this good opportunity while the opponent isn’t warmed up yet and deliberately pitch the ball at the inside corner which is the hardest point to hit.

I nod my head at Yuuji’s instruction and get ready to pitch. This time, since he didn’t indicate the speed of the ball, I just need to pitch it like before?

(--Slowball.)

“—Eh?”

I was about to pitch it out, and he only gave such a command now. That idiot, at this moment…!

While the ball was about the be pitched up, I force my own movements. Can I make it…!?

The summoned beast pitched the ball out in an awkward manner, and the ball slowly flew to the catcher’s glove. As for the ballpath—it’s not in the direction Yuuji directed! This ball went into a sweet spot!

“—Uh!”

Daishima-sensei’s summoned beast swung the bat hard, and the ball flew high up into the air. The ball landed at 3rd base. That ball looked like it was hit on the bottom of the bat, so he couldn’t hit a long ball.

“I can make it—u!”

Yokomizo-kun’s summoned beast continued to chase the ball and finally managed to catch it in the glove. If there’s no problem, the batter will be out.

“…”

But the umpire didn’t declare that the batter was out. Maybe he’s questioning my seemingly two-part pitch. Though there’s no baserunner, strictly speaking, I did break the pitching rules.

But Ooshima-sensei went back to his own bench on his own, even saying to the umpire, “Just treat it as that I was out.”

Is he not being too fussy because it’s only the first inning? To be honest, I really don’t like Ooshima-sensei’s casual attitude here—but he did help us out.

That damned Yuuji hasn’t recovered yet. Where did that daring decision making of him that’s worth praising go to?

(…I gave the command too slow. I’ll take note next time.)

Yuuji scowled impatiently, but at least he understood that he should apologize for the error just now.

In this unstable situation, the match continued.

Right now, it’s 2 men out and bases full. After Hasegawa-sensei hit a fly ball, two batters hit two base hits, and I walked on batter, causing this devastating situation. We kept the ball low, but that was enough to cause a crisis.

Thus, the net batter will be the first batter Fuse-sensei as we went through one round of the batting order. This is his second time in the batter’s box, so he should more or less be used to controlling the summoned beast. I can’t expect him to make an error like the last time now.

Perhaps he saw that I’m too nervous, as I caught Hideyoshi raising his hand at me, seemingly trying to say something to me. Is he trying to ask me to throw a pickoff to relax myself in this disadvantageous situation?

The runner at first base didn’t look like he was going to steal base, so there’s no need to throw it at him, but to buy time, I still pitched the ball at Hideyoshi.

PAKN. The ball that wasn’t pitched too hard immediately landed in Hideyoshi’s summoned beast’s glove. Of course, the runner at first base wasn’t tagged out as he casually returned back to the bag.

“SAFE!”

The umpire’s decision rang. Of course, I don’t think that I can get a third man out here, and the I threw a pickoff to calm myself down—at least that’s what I think. But Hideyoshi looked troubled for some reason. Hm? What is it? Did I throw that ball strangely or something.

“Time.”

Hideyoshi called out to the umpire and ask for a timeout, and then led his summoned beast to me. Most likely, Hideyoshi wants to give me suggestions while returning the ball to me.

“Hm? Hideyoshi, what’s wrong?”

“Uu, actually—”

Hideyoshi leaned closer to me as he looked like he’s about to whisper something to me. Beside us, our summoned beasts lean together like us.

“Actually what?”

“Actually, after this game—I want to take a bath.”

“—Uu!”

At that moment, I forget everything about baseball, and my consciousness started to swim.

Hideyoshi…wants to…bath…?

Why did he say such a thing out of the sudden? What benefit does Hideyoshi get for messing with my heart at this moment? Or there’s a deeper meaning to this? Maybe it has something to do with the notion that Hideyoshi’s breasts are growing a little?

“I just want to say that. Sorry for disturbing you.”

There seemed to be some ploy as Hideyoshi gave me a devilishly cute smile before returning back to his defensive position, but I couldn’t get rid of the wild thoughts in my mind.

I don’t understand. Why would Hideyoshi mention about bathing with me? What should I do after hearing him say that? Do I have to guard Hideyoshi while he’s bathing?

“PLAY!”

The umpire’s call to continue the match entered my ears.

That, that’s right. We still have a baseball game. Right now, I shouldn’t be thinking of why Hideyoshi suddenly mentioned about bathing. I need to think of how to get past this dangerous situation, and bath with Hideyoshi! If we can beat the teachers, I can smile and bath together with Hideyoshi. But if we lose to the teachers, I will have to cry and bath with Hideyoshi. I DON’T WANT THAT!

“…Well, I feel that Akihisa-kun’s giving off a really evil presence.”

“…I don’t know what’s going on either, but seeing him like this makes me really angry.”

Alright! At this moment, I’m all pumped up. Either way, I have to get a 3rd man out—eh, hold it, that’s strange?

“Hm? Where did the ball go?”

Just when I was about to pitch, I found out that my summoned beast wasn’t holding the ball. That’s strange? When Hideyoshi came over to the pitcher’s mound with his summoned beast, I believed he did bring the ball over…didn’t I receive the ball?

I start to look around for the ball. At this moment,

“Tagged out, here.”

“…What?”

Hideyoshi’s voice could be heard from first base. Tagged out? What’s the situation now?

The ball wasn’t with me, and Hideyoshi that was defending first base is still holding onto the ball I was looking for just a second ago. Then, Hideyoshi reached out the hand that has the glove on and tapped the runner at first base that was slightly far away and ready to run off. Is this the famous—hidden ball?

“RUNNER OUT! SWITCH!”

The umpire declared that we switch over. Eh? Really? We just escaped this dangerous half-inning like that?

“Nice, Kinoshita!”

“You acted really well, using that hidden ball!”

“…Good job.”

“At least I was of some use now.”

After walking back to the bench, everyone praised Hideyoshi for his brilliant performance. He really saved us there. Really, I thought that that half-inning as a goner. If that’s the case—

“So I can bath happily with Hideyoshi!”

“…Akihisa, what’s with that messed-up thinking of yours?”

Hideyoshi gave me a ‘I don’t know what to do with you look’. Hm? There seems to be something strange with that.

“Eh? But didn’t you just say on the mound that you wanted to bath with me, Hideyoshi?”

“What are you talking about? I didn’t say that just now—“

Speaking halfway through, Hideyoshi suddenly remembered something and immediately remembered,

“No, wait! Speaking of which, I seemed to have said it just now! That’s right! A bath! Akihisa, you must go to the men’s bath with me—Kuu!”

“Oh my, Kinoshita, how can that do? A bath is separated by gender, you know.”

“That’s right Kinoshita-kun. If you want to bath with your friends, you can bath with us later.”

“Sh, Shimada and Himeji!? Calm down first! Don’t tell me you’re thinking that there’s nothing wrong about bathing with me.”

Himeji-san and Minami grabbed Hideyoshi on each hand as they showed a sweet smile. Uu, that’s right. Even I feel that it’s bad to bath together with the opposite gender, and that it’s unforgivable. It’s the same as when he hid the ball just now, Hideyoshi was just joking around. Ye, yes, just a joke. I knew that, I knew that, so I won’t feel so disappointed…

“…Akihisa, tell me the specifics about bathing just now.”

Unknowingly, Muttsurini prepared a recorder as he stood beside me. Once something pervy happens, this guy’s smell and mobility is really amazing.

Uu, I’ll just leave this thing that happens normally aside.

“Alright, time for us to attack! Time to concentrate!”

“““OOOHHH!!!”””

☆

“Alright, everyone. Time for us to defend again. Got to do our best.”

“Oh...”

That was fast, really fast. Why did our offense end in the blink of an eye?

The three batters that lined up were quickly struck out, and we switched over. We couldn't even get a base on balls, let alone a single hit. We're just getting pounded here.

We're attacking later, and so as the second inning ended, it became the top half of the third inning. The subject changed from world history to biology.

The first batter Fuse-sensei hit a nice hit, and the second batter Terai-sensei was intending to do a sacrifice bunt, but unexpectedly, it became no men out and runners on first and second base. Before I noticed it, danger lurked in front of us again.

And the third batter—is her again.

“Please guide me through.”

The talented woman who's the level head—Takahashi Yoko-sensei again stood in the batter's box.

(No need to send her on base?)

(Of course not.)

I expected Yuuji's answer. If we walk Takahashi-sensei here, we have to face Ironman with bases full.

Takahashi-sensei's scary, but the next batter Ironman's even scarier. With that score and freakish athleticism, he's not someone we can beat no matter how hard we try.

“I'll hit it well this time.”

Takahashi-sensei held her bat in a really short and obvious manner, she intends to bunt. Well, she just looked like she just wanted a hit. Someone among the teachers must have taught her that, I suppose.

(Outside corner, high, fastball.)

Yuji wanted me to throw at the furthest point from Takahashi-sensei's summoned beast's reach. This should be a decision made to counter her bunt.

I use all my strength and pitch the ball according to where Yuuji indicated. If she's not ready, I guess it'll be hard to hit the ball—

"Well, just as I expected."

""—Wha?""

Suddenly, Takahashi-sensei extended her arms. Damn it! I got carelessly thinking that Takahashi-sensei was an amateur at baseball, but she's still the smartest of all the teachers!

As the ballpath got seen through, the pitch I threw with all I got was hit easily, and the ball flew out in a very low trajectory.

"No, DON'T COME HERE! DON'T COME FLYING AT MEAHHHHHHHH!!"

Fukumura-kun's summoned beast got sent flying away again and rolled to center field. K…u! he got completely defeated again!

"Takahashi-sensei! Please run in order, starting from first base!"

An instruction could be heard from the teachers. Che! They're so naggy!

"Got it. I won't make the same mistake twice."

Takahashi-sensei's summoned beast ran through first base, second base and third base at a speed respective to her score. It's amazing that she can be that fast, really fast.

And because she was too fast—

"Takahashi-sensei…you're, out…"

"Why?"

She sprinted past the other baserunners in front of her as she was too fast.

""""…""""

Everyone seeing this is dumbstruck.

In baseball, one of the rules state that the baserunner behind, if not out, will be treated as out if he overtakes the front baserunner. Anyway, she will be out if she runs past a baserunner in front.

We, well, I can understand that she doesn't know these baseball rules…erm, I guess…? I think because Takahashi-sensei's summoned beast was too powerful that such a tragedy occurred, but that's lucky to us.

"Anyway, you're out, Takahashi-sensei. Please return to the bench."

"I can't accept that."

"That's the way it is…"

Takahashi-sensei narrowed her eyes unhappily, but she returned to her camp obediently. Well, this exchange match made me suddenly have a feeling that my distance with Takahashi-sensei got shortened…she really feels like my sister in some ways.

"Eh…hai, tagged out. Hey, Shimada (pew)!"

"Eh?"

"(PA) OK—tagged him out here."

“Ah!”

The other two baserunners that were stunned by Takahashi-sensei’s actions got tagged out by Sugawa-kun and Minami respectively. Well, we got 3 outs like this…

“…3 outs, switch.”

The umpire declared weakly as if he was muttering to himself. I can’t say that I don’t understand. Having 3 men out like this is completely unheard of, so I guess the umpire would be so listless.

“I can’t believe that Takahashi-sensei would do such a ridiculous thing...”

“Actually, I always looked up to Takahashi-sensei…”

Fuse-sensei and Terai-sensei look dejected as they return back to the bench. Takahashi-sensei’s normally hardworking, smart and knowledgeable when she’s in the staff room, so I guess they should be rather shocked on seeing her like this.

“An, anyway, we passed through another crisis. Time to hit a base hit now! Who’s the next batter—ha?”

“It’s you, Akihisa.”

Ah, oh yeah. So my responsibilty’s really great. I have to meet everyone’s expectations no matter what.

“…I have great faith in you, Sakamoto.”

“Sakamoto, we can only rest our hopes on you.”

“Please hit a homeroom.”

For some reason, my classmates started stating their vote of confidence to the batter after me.

“Is everyone doing that so as not to burden me with too much pressure?”

““““…Ah…well, you can put it like that…Anyway, Yoshii…””””

“FORGET ABOUT THIS! I DON’T WANT YOUR CONFIDENCE LIKE THIS!”

The way everyone showed their expectations of me made me unable to hide my disappointment as it showed on my face. Even my heart’s crying now.

“Well…Akihisa-kun, please do your best!”

At this moment, I heard an Angelic voice healing me.

“Hi, Himeji-san…! Thank you! I’ll do my best!”

“Yes, I’ll cheer you on!”

“Alright! I must get on base! That’ll be my gift for Himeji-san!”

It’s time to show my manly side. I have to show my cool side to make others think better about me. I went to the batter’s box with swagger and watch the opponent pitch the ball right in the middle of my vision.

“HIT BY PITCH!”

“GYYYAHHH!!!!! MY HANNNDD! MY LEFT WRIST STARTED TO LOSE FEELINGGGGGG!! AAAHHHHHH!”

“So, sorry Yoshii-kun…I had a bit of problem with the force I used just now.”

Just when I stepped from with swagger, the opponent just gave me a wild pitch…it was a bad pitch, but why was the force so great!!

“We, well…Akihisa-kun said that he would dedicate this moving onto base to me, but how can I accept it…”

“Mizuki, just snort and mock him all you want and say that he’s embarrassing for trying to look cool.”

“Ha, okay…”

“Uu…I wanted to show off, but I embarrassed myself…”

I finally pulled my body through the excruciating pain and head off to first base silently. My summoned beast look like it just escaped from the gates of hell.

But even so, I did end up on base, and without anyone out. It’s apt to say that it’s our best chance. I’ll just have to wait for the next batter to perform well.

“Alright, time for me to go up.”

The next batter Yuuji entered the batter’s box. With Yuuji’s score and athletic ability, maybe we can break through in this half-inning.

Chemistry teacher, Fuse Fumihiro, Biology, 269 points

Vs

F Class, Sakamoto Yuuji, Biology, 188 points.

Though biology’s the subject used in this inning, the pitcher’s still Fuse-sensei, the teacher in charge of Chemistry, as there’s only one Biology teacher who’s free enough to be here and supervise. Fuse-sensei, who took over as pitcher, has a better score than Yuuji, but with Yuuji’s own athletic ability and reflexes, this matchup’s worth watching. I got to get ready first and rush the moment Yuuji hit the ball.

“I have to be careful not to throw a wild pitch…”

Fuse-sensei’s summoned beast gets ready to pitch and launches the ball from his hand. The ball was right down the middle at an ordinary speed. Maybe he deliberately controlled the force on the ball because of the hit pitch on me. If that’s the case…there’s a good chance!

“—Uu.”

Yuuji watched this ball pass as his body tremble--but he did not swing.

“STRIKE!”

In the end, the opponent got a nice start. Maybe Yuuji didn’t hit that ball because he was thinking about something, or did he just miss the opportunity.

Just when I tilt my head as I don’t understand, Fuse-sensei then pitched the second ball. This time it’s the low outside corner. It seems that the ball can barely squeeze into the strikezone. How should I deal with this ball?

“Damn…it!”

Like just now, Yuuji trembled, but this time, he actually swung the bat.

Kang! What resounded wasn’t a loud crisp sound as the ball rolled in front of the pitcher. That moron! He didn’t hit well because he hesitated!

The pitchered picked up the ball that dropped and threw directly to second base. Damn it! I can’t make it in time!

“OUT!”

The ball already landed in the second baseman’s glove before my summoned beast could even reach there, and the second baseman then threw the ball at first base.

“OUT!”

The batter Yuuji was out, and in the blink of an eye, it became two men out. This is a rare chance, and unfortunately, we couldn’t take advantage of it well.

“DAMN IT!”

Once we returned to the bench, I heard Yuuji howl out.

I bring my summoned beast back to the bench, and at this moment, Minami leans over to me.

(Aki, what’s wrong with Sakamoto?)

Minami looked over at Yuuji worriedly and whispered to me softly. Speaking of which, Minami was busy trying to convince Hideyoshi to change into cheerleader costumes, so she didn’t notice Yuuji quarreling with Kirishima-san.

(He had a bit of a quarrel with Kirishima-san…)

(Fu…so something happened…)

I didn’t explain it specifically to Minami, but it seemed that she caught onto something. Maybe she felt that it’s not good to dig into private matters like that as she didn’t ask any more and returned back to the bench.

“STRIKE THREE! BATTER OUT! SWITCH!!”

“Uu…I’m sorry…”

As I was talking to Minami, Himeji-san was struck out and returned back. Just like that, we switched over offense and defense again.

3rd inning over, and we’re losing 0-1. We’re just losing by one point, but this match’s basically a one-sided beatdown!

I feel that it’s time to come up with a reversal like usual, but the most important thing is that Yuuji’s still in that state..

Seems like we can only give up. Besides, trying to beat the teachers is basically like dreaming. Right now, I should so something to console Yuuji.

“Yuuji, your feelings—”

“Ahh?”

Before I finished, Yuuji glared at me angrily. It seems that he’s still raging inside.

“Really…Yuuji, you should be more mature, right? Kirishima-san would occasionally be in a bad mood too.”

“WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY BEING IN A BAD MOOD! I CAN’T EXPLAIN THAT AT ALL!”

I basically just added fuel to the fire, as Yuuji’s rage just burned even more.

He clenched his fist and trembled in anger.

“IT WAS JUST SOME MEANINGLESS PIECE OF PAPER! WHY MUST I NOT BE ANGRY AT HER!”

Here we go again. How many times did he roar today? We can’t patch things up like this.

Yare yare, really, you…just when I was sighing—

“Eh? You’re talking about the piece of scrap paper?”

Himeji-san tilted her head in a weird manner. That’s strange? Did she know what was confiscated from Kirishima-san?

“What’s wrong, Himeji? Are you going to lecture me and tell me not to treat important documents to others as a trash?”

Even though he’s not angry with Himeji-san, Yuuji sounded really unfriendly.

Himeji-san stared at Yuuji with an inexplicable look,

“No, that’s not it. I’m not talking about that…the paper you just mentioned about…was different from what I heard…”

Eh? Different from what she heard? What’s different?

This time, Yuuji and I have question marks above our head.

“What do you mean by that, Himeji-san—”

“Well…I heard that what was confiscated from Shouko-chan was the wedding headdress she got from Sakamoto-kun at Kisaragi Highlands…”

““…Ha?””

For some reason, even I asked back at these unexpected words.

Wedding headdress. The wedding headdress she’s talking about…isn’t that the thin piece of cloth covering the face when wearing the wedding gown. Is it that thing that’s worn with the wedding gown when the bride’s about to be married? Speaking of Kisaragi Highlands, is it that thing from the wedding experience? Did Kirishima-san get the wedding certificate confiscated from her?

Facing us with question marks above our heads, Himeji-san continued to explain.

“Shouko-chan once told me happily that Sakamoto-kun gave it to her after she got laughed at in public. It was a wedding headdress full of important memories.”

“Ah, I remember that as well. She even looked happy when she mentioned that during our study meeting. That left a deep impression on me. So the headdress got confiscated…no wonder she looked so shocked.”

Standing beside us, Minami lowered her eyes in sympathy.

““…”” Having heard the facts from Himeji-san’s mouth, Yuuji and I can’t say a single thing out.

That was the only dream Kirishima-san harbored since young. It must have hurt her to hear so many people mock her like that. However,

“‘But then, I won't laugh at your dream’…”

If Yuuji said such a thing, it will become the most important memory in her life.

“So I felt that it was too much when Sakamoto-kun said that the headdress was something ‘worthless’.”

It’s no wonder that Kirishima-san would be so shocked after hearing those words, because Yuuji didn’t care about that headdress at all. Yuuji said that ‘I won’t laugh at your dream’, but his cruel words mocked Kirishima-san’s dream.

“If it’s Shouko-chan, she should be able to get that headdress back if she explains to the teachers properly…”

Himeji-san and Minami looked down in sympathy. The teachers wouldn’t mock Kirishima-san’s story. Everyone knows that, but even so—she’s afraid of the one in a million chance.

My mind recalls the words Yuuji said.

That thing.

That useless trash.

I’ll throw it away.

The dream she always kept so preciously just got mocked by Yuuji like that. Those words would be so cruel to Kirishima-san.

“…Yuuji…what have you done…”

Though this is unrelated to me, even I can’t help but think of covering my face and sigh. No wonder Himeji-san’s standing on Kirishima-san’s side.

“Sakamoto-kun…that was given to Shouko-chan by you. You didn’t know what was confiscated…?”

“…I really didn’t know.”

Yuuji answered weakly and honestly.

Anyway, Yuuji was mistaken. Kirishima-san thought that Yuuji knew what it was because Yuuji gave it to her. That’s why she couldn’t accept that it was something ‘worthless’.

“…”

It’s only now that we all realized that we were thinking about different things.

Nobody can be blamed as everyone was mistaken. But if there’s any side worth feeling sympathy for, it’ll be Kirishima-san. Even though he didn’t know what was going on, Yuuji did hurt her. Because of this, Yuuji showed such a shocked expression when he realized everything.

Trying to wake up this guy that got lost in thoughts, I deliberately raised my voice to ask him,

“Alright, Yuuji, what do you intend to do? If this keeps up, we can’t get back those confiscated items.”

If we lose this match, we won’t be able to get back out confiscated items, either our treasured items or a certain person’s memorabilia.

“What else can we do…we can only defend well and get points to win the match.”

But even so, he doesn’t have a detailed plan. It seems that Yuuji’s mind is still unable to move.

“Even so, Yuuji, the next fourth batter’s that Ironman. We have to think of something or this inning’s not going to be easy.”

Having remained quiet up till now, Hideyoshi joined in the conversation. Like what Hideyoshi said, the next batting order is from Ironman onwards, and it’s his second time. If we use our tactic from before, the teachers will definitely score. Besides, we can’t really expect the teachers to make any mistakes now.

I glance at Yuuji. This time, that idiot’s trying to move his brain and think of a way to get through the next inning.

--That’s the first time I ever saw him so serious ever since I knew him.

“…”

Lacking the casual attitude he had up till now, Yuuji started to think of a plan.

Really, since this guy’s showing such an expression…looks like I should lend him a hand.

“Yuuji.”

“…What is it, Akihisa?”

Yuuji looked up. I stretch and point my finger and myself and Yuuji as I say,

“Switch positions.”

““““…Eh?””””

On hearing my words, everyone gave me a ‘what is this guy thinking about look’, but amongst them, Yuuji was the only one who realized the meaning behind that proposal. He looks straight into my eyes and asks,

“…Can you do it?”

Yuuji’s words were more like confirmation than a question.

You’re talking about that at this moment?

“Let’s give it a shot. We can’t lose this match, right?”

“…Yeah.”

On hearing me say that, Yuuji gave me a smirk.

“What’s going on, Akihisa? It’s okay for Yuuji to be the pitcher, but who can be the catcher in our class? Are you talking about Himeji?”

“Haha, Hideyoshi, what are you talking about? How can I let Himeji-san do such a tough job?”

The catcher has a lot of things to deal with. It’s too cruel to let Himeji-san to carry out this role.

“If that’s the case, who can catch Yuuji’s pitches?”

“Yeah. In this situation, there’s still one person who can catch the pitches.”

It’s simple. If I don’t want to be ejected from the game because I have no points left, I just need to catch every single pitch. In front of my body, right at the center of the glove. I just need to catch every single pitch without leaving any injuries on me. It’s just that simple. And as for the only person with that level of control…that’s me.

“Bring it, Yuuji. I’ll catch every single pitches of yours!”

“You said so, Akihisa. Don’t regret because you said those words. Your summoned beast’s going to fly if you don’t catch my pitches.”

It’s now the top half of the fourth inning. The match officially begins for us now.

☆

“PLAY!”

The match began again. Yuuji’s the pitcher, and I’m the catcher. We’re facing the fourth batter Ironman.

(Right down the middle. I’m going to throw it straight.)

(Got it.)

I ready my glove at the position Yuuji designated through eye contact. The first ball is going to be a pitch right down the middle. That’s one daring path for someone stepping up for the first time.

Yuuji’s summoned beast gets ready to pitch and throws the first ball with a powerful force.

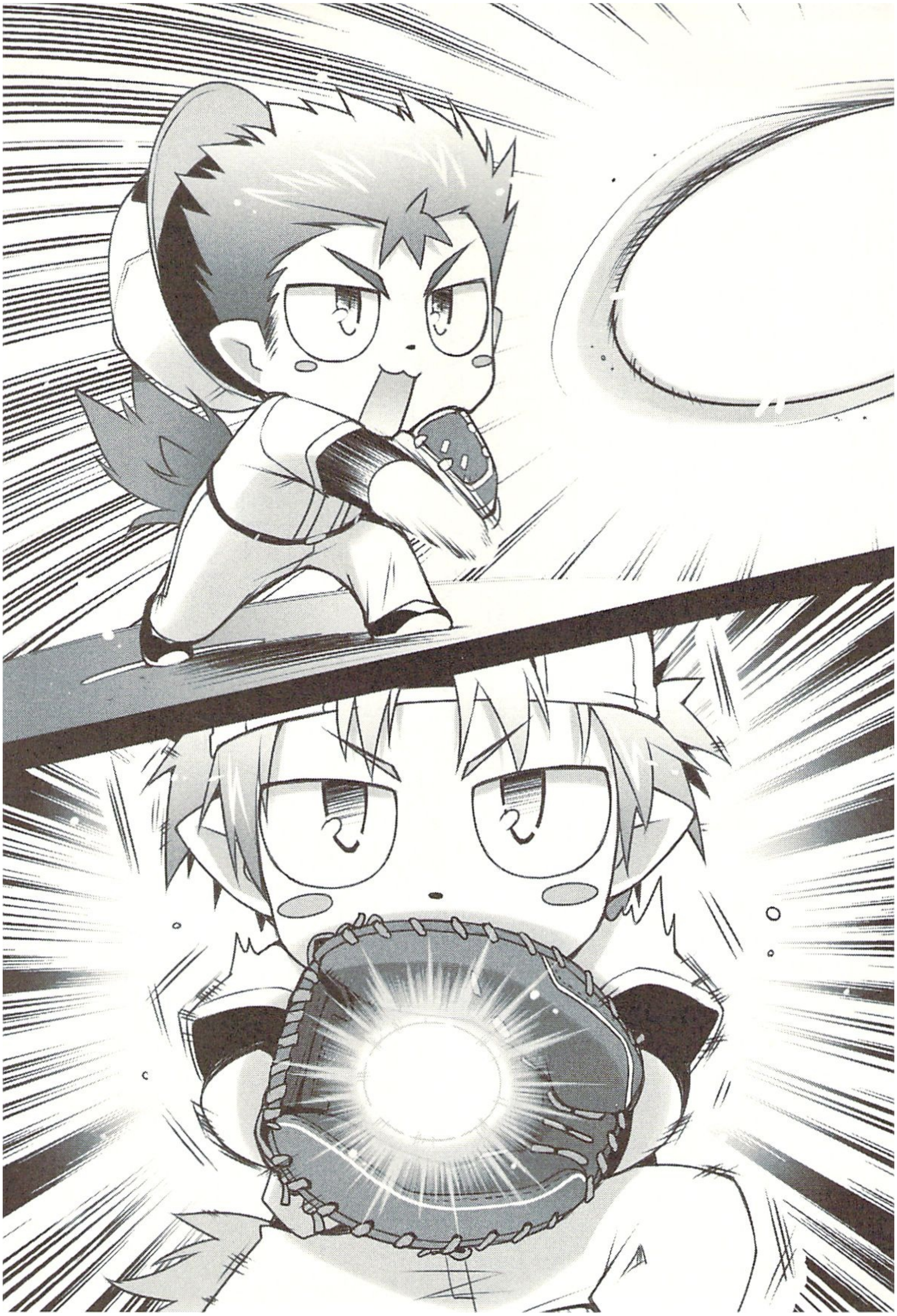
PAM! The glove let out a crisp sound, and my arms and shoulders feel the transfer of the recoil. It hurts—! That bastard pitched at me with such force!

F Class, Sakamoto Yuuji, English Writing, 281 points

Vs

F Class, Yoshii Akihisa, English Writing, 75 points

I caught the ball from the front, but I still got damaged. Seems like I have to exert more force and catch the ball down the middle of the glove with a softer stance. Concentrate. I have to concentrate and catch every single pitch Yuuji throws to prevent any damage.



“STRIKE!”

The umpire hesitated for a while before making his decision.

Ironman couldn’t even react to Yuuji’s pitch. That’s to be expected, since after getting used to my weak pitches, even Ironman’s eyes can’t catch up to a fastball like that.

“Nice pitch.”

“Of course.”

I threw the ball back at Yuuji and quipped a praise at him. I then see Yuuji smirk. Really, this guy’s not cute at all even when I gave him a rare praise.

(Right down the middle. Straight. I’m going to pitch now.)

On catching the ball, Yuuji gave me that signal through eye contact. This bastard…he’s going to pitch without resting?

I frantically readied my glove.

Yuuji caught the ball, and without giving the normal hand signals, he suddenly widened his arm and pitched at me.

The ball went down the path just now and flew over in the blink of an eye. The impact was transferred to my body again.

“S…STRIKE!”

I threw the ball back at Yuuji and warned him with my eyes,

(That was dangerous! What will happen if I couldn’t catch it!)

I managed to catch it, but that pitch just now was really dangerous. If I wasn’t careful, my summoned beast may end up on the casualty list, and maybe it can’t fight on.

But, that Yuuji,

(Stop yapping. Didn’t you say that you would catch every pitch I throw?)

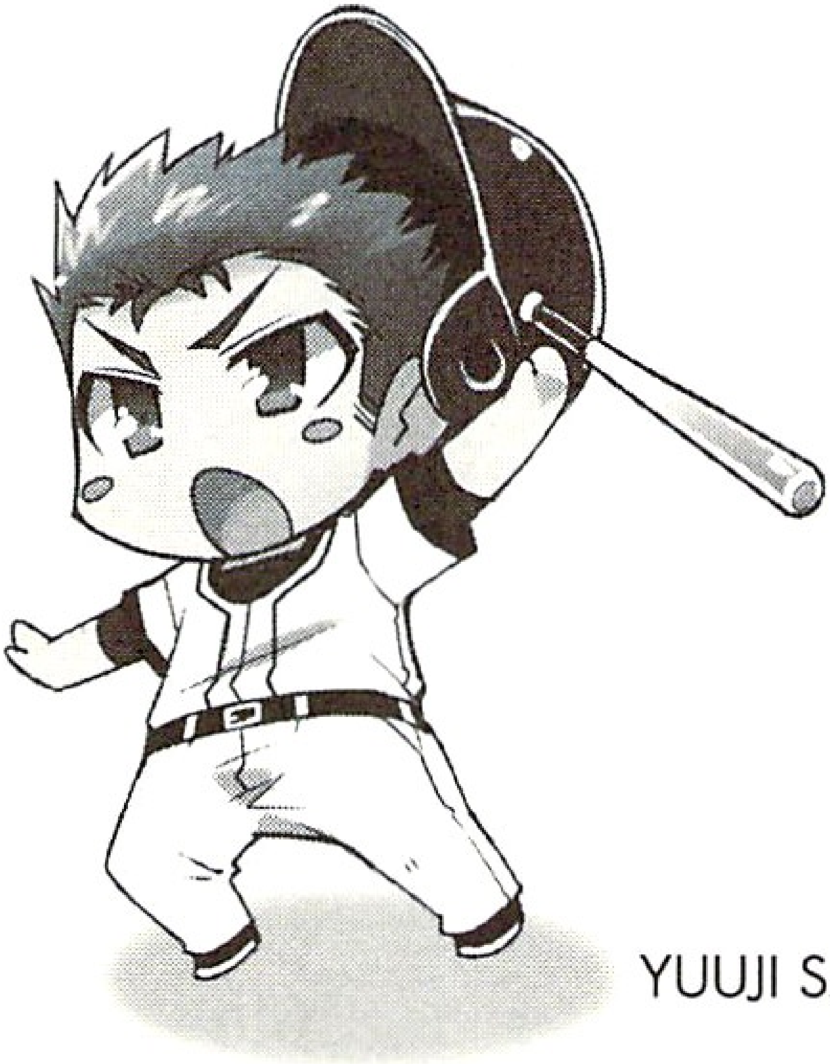
Yuuji responded like that with his eyes.

…That bastard…! He sure can talk! My score’s quite far off from Yuuji, but my control of the summoned beast’s definitely better! Just wait and see!

Maybe my thoughts reached Yuuji, as he pinched the ball without waiting for me to answer.

The ballpath this time is—since it’s this guy, I can tell without looking.

“Alright, senseis. I’m sorry for being so stubborn…because a lot of things happened today.”



YUUJI SAKAMOTO

Yuuji’s summoned beast pitched the third ball.

The next moment, the ball flew straight forcefully with blazing speed and ended up right in the middle of my glove. I managed to catch it well, but the impact numbed my arms.

“STRIKE THREE, BATTER OUT!”

With that, it’s three balls and three strikes, and we managed to get the first out.

“From now on, you’re not going to get another point off us!”

This is our real ability when we fight, and what that means is that the teachers aren’t going to hit the ball anymore!

The Eighth Question

Please read the following passage and choose the wrong conclusion from the brackets.

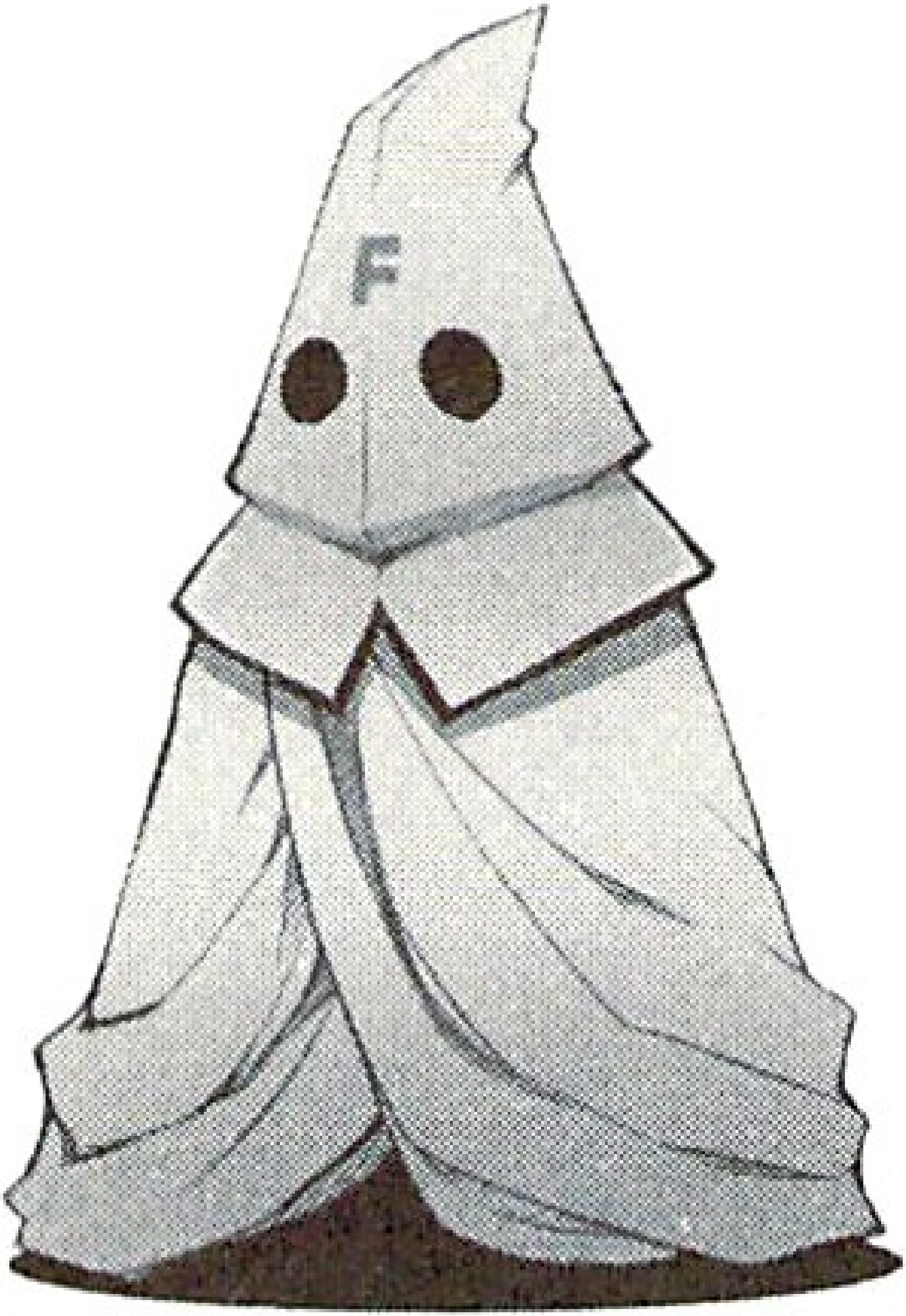
> Jim and Della were a young couple. Even though they're poor, they still loved each other.
> Jim had a gift with him. It's the golden watch that's passed down from his family. And Della's treasure was the beautiful hair of hers.
> Christmas was about to arrive, and Della wanted to buy a gift for her beloved husband. She cut off her beautiful hair willingly and sold it to the wig shop. She used the money she earned from the sale to buy a platinum locket for Jim to hang on his golden watch.
> When Jim returned back home, he saw Della with her hair cut off...he wasn't angry, shocked, unhappy nor afraid, but felt complicated as the gift he bought for Della was that beautiful hair-comb Della always wanted.[7]
>
> (1) Because Della couldn't use the item he bought for her.
> (2) Because he felt happy about understanding Della's feelings for him.
> (3) Because the originally beautiful Della looked ugly now that her hair was cut, and Jim felt that it was a pity.
> (4) Because Jim already sold the golden watch, and the gift Della bought for him couldn't be used anymore.

Kirishima Shouko's answer:

(3)

Teacher's comment

That's correct. This is a famous story about Christmas. The gifts both husband and wife got for each other couldn't be used, but they understood each other's feelings for each other. It's a heartwarming story, and sensei hope that the students can have their own wonderful families in the future.



FFF

Kudou Aiko's answer

(3) *Short hair's rather cute too!

Teacher's comment

The answer's correct, but sensei feels that your understanding seem to be a little off.

Either way, the question stated to 'note the wrong conclusion', so (3) is the correct answer.

Sugawa Ryo's answer

(Ku)risumasu' (Christmas) supposed to be the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth. THIS STORY IS DAMN WRONG FOR HAVING MAN AND WOMAN EXCHANGE IN SOME SICKLY AND ICKY SWEET EMOTIONAL EXCHANGE!!

Teacher's comment

There's no such thing as option (Ku).

“ALRIGHT EVERYONE! LISTEN UP! WE HAVE ONLY TWO CHANCES TO COUNTERATTACK! WE HAVE TO GET THE POINTS AND OUR TREASURES BACK!”

““““OOOHHHHH!!!””””

“WE MAY LOSE TO THEM IN SCORES, BUT OUR ATHLETIC ABILITIES DEFINITELY WON’T LOSE! WE MUST LET THEM SEE THE ABILITY OF US YOUTH!

““““OOOHHHHH!!!””””

“WE’RE GOING ALL OUT FROM NOW ON! SO…PLEASE ASSIST ME A

MUCH AS YOU CAN! WE'RE GOING TO GET OUR TREASURES BACK! OUR MOTTO IS—"

""""GET BACK ERO-BOOK!!!""""

"TIME TO COUNTERATTACK! LET'S DO IT, GUYS!!"

""""LEAVE IT TO US!!!""""

As Yuuji rallied everyone like usual, everyone got pumped. That Yuuji finally did what he had to do. Seems like he's finally ready to bring on his real ability.

"KONDOU, YOKOMIZO, HIDEYOSHI!"

Yuuji called out the first, second and third batter, and the three people that were called out walked to Yuuji in unison.

"It's time to carry out the plan. You guys know that we can't win if we keep this up. Even if we managed to get a base on balls or hit by pitch, it's unlikely that we'll get any points from them."

We managed to defend quite well just now, but our offense is rather pitiful. Yuuji's right. Even if we manage to get on base somehow, we can't guarantee that we will be able to get any points from them.

"So right now, we can only bank everything on this plan. I want you people to drag the time on as much as you can."

"Mn, I got it."

"For our Ero—for the sake of our reference books, I will think of something no longer how much time I have to drag on."

"But we can't fail this time."

All 3 of them nod their heads and agreed to take part in this operation. It's a rare chance for them to step up, so of course they wish to have an outstanding performance, so they agreed to the delaying tactic. Every time this happens, I always feel that they're members of class F.

“Ero book, ero boo, ero book…”

“Pillow, swimsuit photo, bathroom curtain…”

…They’re really members of F class…

“PLAY!”

The batter will try to delay the game without breaking the rules as each of them entered the batter’s bunting position. It seems like he wants to get a foul ball to waste more time.

“Are you ready, Yuuji?”

“Of course. I already gave instructions to those guys. Now we just need to wait for the time to arrive.”

“Is that so? Then we can only pray for the three of them to delay time as much as possible.”

“Yeah.”

I exchanged words with Yuuji as I prayed earnestly inside while looking at the situation on the field. Our opponents are the teachers. I don’t even know whether we can even delay some time.

“STRIKE! BATTER OUT!”

“Ku…!”

After recovering, I found that Kondou-kun was forced into a tight spot. Even after hanging on for so long, he finally took 3 strikes.

The next batter Yokomizo-kun went all out to fight, but the opponent landed some perfect fastballs in some nice locations, and he got struck out as well. Hideyoshi's the only batter left in this inning.

But, our chance—still hasn't arrived yet.

"It guess it's about time…"

"Just a little bit. It'll begin in just a while. Do your best, Hideyoshi…"

"FOUL BALL!"

Just when we were discussing this, the match continued. Hideyoshi continued to swung the bat to try and hit the fastball the teacher pitched.

Right now, the time on the school wall is 2.28pm. it feels like time just went by so slowly because there's no second hand.

"Damn it. If only that teacher pitched 4 balls…"

"Based on that teacher's personality, I think he'll pitch rather carefully."

The pitcher for this inning is the English Writing teacher Yamada-sensei. Though the pitches he threw weren't so fast that we couldn't react, his control is rather good. Looking at this, I don't think we can expect a 4 balls walk.

"Can't we hit it out?"

"Well, we can't possibly hit it far. Besides, the shortstop and second baseman are that Terai and Ooshima."

One is Terai-sensei who's young and played baseball before, and the other is the health and physical education teacher Ooshima-sensei. We can't possibly beat them with our abilities even if we do our best. Besides, the opponent can't possibly throw four balls, so we can only pray for Hideyoshi to do his best and hang on…

"FOUL BALL!"

I don’t know how many foul balls has it been now, and right now, It’s 1 ball and 2 strikes. While the opponent can throw a ball, we can’t allow any mistakes here. However, with the teacher throwing that many pitches, Hideyoshi’s concentration should be at his limit.

“Not yet, not yet…”

“Hang in there, please, Hideyoshi…”

I can feel these anxious emotions climbing up our backs, but as we are only watching the match, the only thing we can do is to pray.

KLANG!

“FOUL!”

Every time the ball was pitched, cold sweat would break out of my back. Looking at how things stand now, it won’t be weird for Hideyoshi to be out at this point.

The palm of my tightly clenched fist is filled with sweat as I bend my upper body on the bench, earnestly waiting for the time to arrive fast.

“…It’s here.”

Suddenly, Muttsurini muttered.

“Uu!!”

Yuuji felt jumpy and turned around, looking at the loudspeaker hanging on the school building.

“...Zzu…zu…”

Some static could be heard from the loudspeaker as the sharp sounds reached our ears.

“IS IT HERE?”

Yuuji shouted out in excitement.

The next second, the audio broadcast could be heard throughout the entire sports arena.

“Right now, there will be a borrowing race in the center sports hall. All participants, please head to the designated area—”

““““IT’S HERE—!!!””””

Everyone cried out in unison.

After that, Hideyoshi was thrown out and finally ruled to be out. Now, it’ll be a switchover, but even so…we achieved our objective!

“Yare yare…looks like I managed to succeed.”

“Ahh! Hideyoshi! Nice going! Nice job too, Kondou and Yokomizo!”

Patting Hideyoshi’s shoulder as he returned to the bench, Yuuji looked extremely happy. We were waiting for this moment!

“Eh? What’s wrong with them? We got 3 outs on them, yet they look so happy.”

“Uu, who knows.”

“Those guys must be planning something.”

Several teachers feel amazed by our reaction. It’s true that our attack ended, but this is a trap for our next inning. We focused on the last inning, and we have to use that inning to get our final victory!

“Yoshii, Sakamoto. I don’t know what you’re happy about, but hurry up and get on field to defend!”

Ironman walked to our noisy bench and prompted us to hurry up and get ready.

“We know, but just wait.”

“? Wait for what?”

“You’ll see. I think they’ll be here soon.”

I smiled to Ironman who doesn’t understand anything and looked around. As expected, a few people are running over to us. They’re here! Our class F classmates!”

“What are those guys doing? Why are they rushing so fast—”

Ironman stared at the 3 students who came running here and can’t help but have a question mark above his head. At this moment, those students shouted at the supervising teachers who are on the baseball field.

“Endou-sensei! We’re having a borrowing race! Sorry, but please come along with us!”

“Eh? But I have to be in charge of the match here!”

“Just come along with us!”

“But—”

“It’s useless to talk further! An ordinary event’s much more important than the baseball tournament!”

““““—u?””””

I can see several teachers widening their eyes in shock. That’s right, this event was planned beforehand. This baseball match’s just used as a good chance to get along, and the other events are of priority.

“Ah, well…sorry senseis. I have to go first.”

“Hurry up, sensei!”

The teacher in charge of supervision in this match, Endou-sensei, got dragged by the hand.

“This can’t be helped. The teachers on the bench will have to—”

“Funakoshi-sensei! Please come along with us!”

“Takenaka-sensei, please!”

The other two teachers on the bench were called up, and the ones who called them were our F class members as well. With that, the teachers have no more additional help.

“Sakamoto, that’s your plan, right?”

“Well, what do you think?”

“Stop messing around. Weren’t the people who came over all F class people?”

“Haha, that’s a coincidence, right?”

Of course it’s not. After knowing the lineup of the teachers, Yuuji already requested our classmates to borrow a few teachers away. I guess the paper they drew should be something completely different from what they needed to borrow.

“Ironman, there’s no other teachers left now, you know.”

“Can’t be helped. I’ll just have to ask the teachers in the previous few innings.”

“That’ll be against the rules. The rules were already decided that the ‘same subject can’t be used twice’. Didn’t you forget?”

“Then what do you want me to do? There’s no more teachers who can act as supervisor, and we can’t use any teachers who’ve supervised the previous few subjects. Are you planning on making us compete with 8 players?”

Ironman’s sharp eyes brush past our faces. He must have thought that we will use this to render the match useless. No no, who’ll do such a bothersome thing? Besides, we won’t get any benefit if that’s the case.

“I—Nishimura-sensei, there are other subjects that can be used to decide this, isn’t it?”

“What are you saying, Yoshii. The teachers who were able to supervise were taken away.”

“No. What I mean is that even if the supervising teachers were taken away, there’s another subject that can allow us to continue playing.”

This is the plan Yuuji thought of in the beginning. Using the sports meet exchange match’s programmed rules to let us continue this match, a way for us to win.

“For the 5th inning, we’ll use physical education—we’ll win with our real ability!”

We’re not deciding this through marks, but using our own bodies. Physical education is able another subject the students need to learn. We’ll use this real baseball match to thoroughly crush the teachers.

“Alright, everyone. Put on your gloves! The 5th inning’s not going to be easy!”

Yuuji stretched his arm out and pointed at the gloves we borrowed from the baseball club beforehand.

Thus, it’s now the final inning. This is the only teachers-vs-students exchange match, and it will now begin for real.

☆

“ALRIGHT! TIME TO BRING OUR ALL TO THE FIELD!”

“““UOOHHHH!!!”””

Again, I’m the pitcher now, and Yuuji returned back to being the catcher. Our opponent this time is the seventh batter Hasegawa-sensei who’s on for the second time. I was really scared until a while back, but at this moment, I don’t feel afraid at all.

(Outside corner, high, curve.)

I pitch the ball according to Yuuji’s direction. Although my pitching ability’s only at recreational level, but it’s enough to deal with the teachers who aren’t athletic enough!

“Uu…”

“STRIKE!”

Hasegawa-sensei just stood there blankly as the ball just flew into the catcher’s glove. With that, we managed to take the lead in the ballcount.

(Keep low. Straight.)

Nodding my head slightly, I pitched it down and middle. Now, I’ve already forced Hasegawa-sensei into a tight corner.

(Inside corner. Low. Slow ball.)

This is a feisty ball from Yuuji. I smirk slightly and pitch a slow ball as according to his instruction.

“Oh, oh my.”

Completely missing the timing of the slow ball, Hasegawa-sensei bent low but missed the swing.

“STRIKEOUT!”

We dealt with one. Now the next batter’s Ujiie-sensei, and after that, it’s Yamada-sensei.

Yuuji and I mixed slow balls and changeups to mess around the opponent’s batting. This unkind mix dealt with Ujiie-sensei and Yamada-sensei well.

“BATTER OUT! CHANGE!”

The umpire called for a change over.

“Good thing we weren’t facing Ironman or Ooshima-sensei.”

“Yeah.”

I returned back to the rest area and exchanged a few words with Hideyoshi nearby. Good thing we weren’t facing Ironman or Ooshima-sensei. In a real match, those two will definitely be the people we need to watch out for.

“Actually, I really wished that we could borrow them in the borrowing race.”

“Let’s not talk about the kind Endou-sensei. It won’t be that easy to borrow Ironman and Ooshima-sensei.”

Hideyoshi’s right. Those two won’t let us drag them away so easily. Maybe they might even ask to see the content of the paper. If that happened, our lies will be seen through. We would end up revealing the content of the papers if we asked too much, and that’ll be adding insult to injury. So we have to play just a little risk.

“It seems that Ironman and Ooshima-sensei still don’t trust us.”

“After doing so many stupid things, it’s no wonder they won’t believe us.”

We returned to the bench while talking.

After the outfielders all returned, Yuuji looked around at everyone and finally spoke up,

“Alright…now, it’s our last chance to attack.”

Right now, the score’s 0-1. It’s now the bottom half of the last inning. This is our last attack.

“It’s not enough to get a point. We’ll lose if we can’t get a turnaround in this inning. We don’t have a chance of winning in extra innings.”

If we get into extra innings, the teachers who were taken away for the borrowing race will come back. At that time, we’ll go back to deciding this match using scores. At that point, our chances of winning will become zero.

“This inning is the time when we have to show off our real ability. No matter what, we have to get 2 points. LISTEN UP, YOU GUYS! WE ABSOLUTELY HAVE TO WIN THIS MATCH!!!”

“““OOHHHH!!!”””

Our morale’s really strong, so strong that we can see the light of victory. Now, we can only progress on.

However, at this moment—

“If that’s the case, can I switch out with Tsuchiya?”

“Eh?”

“As the first batter of this inning, Minami suddenly made this request. Switch out? What does she want to do?

“What’s wrong, Minami? Don’t you have any confidence?”

“Mn, one reason is that I don’t have the confidence. Either way, I can’t possibly play baseball as well as guys. A girl’s physical abilities can’t match a guy, and I’m not so experienced with baseball after all.”

“I see…girls don’t really get involved in baseball often.”

As compared to us who often skip class to play baseball, Minami’s experience with baseball is really minimal. However, I don’t think she would lose to anyone of us in terms of athletic ability…

“So I want to switch with Tsuchiya. Tsuchiya would definitely perform better than me. And besides—”

“Besides?”

“Besides, in moments like this, a guy showing his best in baseball looks really cool, doesn’t he?”

While saying that, Minami smiled happily.

Minami really looked cute for saying this. Though she did all sorts of terrifying things in front of us, but maybe she has the heart of a girl more than anyone. That idea suddenly popped up in me.

“…I’m going.”

Muttsurini picked the bat up and walked towards home plate. After indicating to the umpire that he wanted to exchange places with Minami, he entered the batter’s box.

“PLAY!”

The umpire called for the bottom half of the 5th inning to begin. The batter’s Muttsurini, and the pitcher we’re going up against is the P.E. teacher Ooshima-sensei.

“Ironman’s the catcher…seems like they’re wary of us making a close play.”

“Well, we were the ones who said that we wanted to take revenge.”

Most likely, they’re afraid that once we hit the ball, the baserunner running to first base will collide with the catcher. If Ironman's the one blocking main base, we'll be blocked by him or even sent flying away no matter how hard we ram in. We have no chance of winning if we ram into the catcher.

Ooshima-sensei pitched the first ball rather forcefully as the arm swung down. The ball zipped through the wind and flew into the glove.

"…uu (PANK!)"

"STRIKE!"

Muttsurini swung the bat below the ball and missed. If he swung it below the ball, it means that the opponent's pitch was a lot faster than he thought. As expected of Ooshima-sensei. He's really a P.E teacher.

"…(su)"

Muttsurini readied his bat again. Ooshima-sensei and Ironman spent some time with the signal, and the second pitch was thrown.

This pitch seems to be flying at a fastball speed, but it glided sideways at the last second. Is that…a slider!? It's just a teachers-vs-students exchange match. What sort of ball was he pitching! That's not like what a mature adult would do!"

"STRIKE!"

Muttsurini missed the second swing. Now, it's two strikes, and he's trapped now.

"Nice pitching, Ooshima-sensei."

Ironman threw the ball back at Ooshima-sensei as he said that. Right now, Muttsurini's staring at Ooshima-sensei's wrist as he gets ready to bat.

Ooshima-sensei pitched a curveball this time. Will Muttsurini be struck out?

"BALL!"

The umpire decided that this was a ball. Looking at where Ironman was putting his glove at, I thought it would be a strike again….it seems like Ooshima-sensei's control isn't that good.

Ooshima-sensei swung his arm and pitched the fourth ball. This ball…will he hit it…!?

"…GO…!"

The ball flew by the pitcher and rolled to third base. Hasegawa-sensei's guarding third base, and I never heard that he's athletic. There should be no problems.

"Oh, oh my."

After picking up the ball, Hasegawa-sensei hurriedly threw to first base, but Muttsurini already passed first base before the ball even reached there.

"SAFE!"

"""WOOOOOHHHH—!!"""

Nice! Now we have the tying run on base. Now, it's no man out, one man on first base, and the next batter is—

"I'LL FOLLOW TSUCHIYA AND GET ON BASE!"

The leader of the FFF—Sugawa-kun.

Sugawa-kun grabbed the bat with swagger and waits for the ball. Ooshima-sensei pitched a straight fastball at Sugawa-kun.

"…Gu…!"

"STRIKE!"

Sugawa-kun just stood there with wide eyes. He probably never expected Ooshima-sensei's pitch to be that amazing.

Ooshima-sensei then pitched a few more fastballs, and Sugawa-kun missed. After going off, Fukumura-kun went past him and entered the batter's box.

"…That was fast. Watch out there."

"Mn, I got it."

Having returned to the bench, Sugawa-kun reminded me. I have never seen Sugawa-kun look so serious, even though it was for the ero-books.

"Ku…!"

Fukumura-kun swung the bat, and the ball rolled up to the front of the pitcher. It seems like his swing lost to the power of the pitch.

Ooshima-sensei quickly picked the ball up, checked the condition at second base, and saw that the agile Muttsurini was about to reach second base with several centimeters left.

Giving up on second base, Ooshima-sensei then coolly passed to first base to throw Fukumura-kun off. Right now, it's 2 men out with the runner on second base.

Finally, it's time for the next batter, and I stepped up.

"Aki. The timing's really great. You'll be the hero if you can knock that out!"

"Well, please do your best, Akihisa-kun! I'll be cheering for you here!"

The two girls in our class cheered for me energetically. Of course, I'm really happy that they would encourage me, and I hope to perform well now. However—

"Thanks. I don't know if I can live up to your expectations, but I'll do my best."

Anyway, I can only answer like this, and I turn around and head to the batter's box.

“So you’re the batter, Yoshii. Seems like things just got interesting.”

The catcher Ironman said that to me as I entered the batter’s box.

Yeah. I feel that this is really interesting.

“Yup. If I can get a base hit, we’ll catch up, and I’ll be the hero of our class.”

“Those girls just cheered for you, right? I know that you want to hit it out—but as a teacher, I have a pride that won’t allow me to lose. I won’t let you hit it out like that.”

“I never expected you to give me any leeway anyway.”

I answered Ironman and raised the bat.

Ooshima-sensei already got ready to pitch the ball. After that, the pitch from Ooshima-sensei flew by me and landed directly into Ironman’s glove.

“BALL!”

The first ball was a ball. It didn’t land into the strikezone well. Maybe he’s wary of me.

“I thought that you would swing at the first pitch.”

“Because you thought that I would try to act cool in front of the girls?”

“Mn, you can say that.”

Ironman pitched the ball back to Ooshima-sensei. I twist my neck lightly and stamp on the ground below me lightly to flatten the red dirt ground lightly and hold the bat in my hand tightly.

Ooshima-sensei checked that Muttsurini’s still at second base, and then pitched the ball at me. It’s a fastball this time, low at the strikezone.

“STRIKE!”

I silently let this ball fly past. Seeing me like this, Ironman seem to feel that something’s not right. It seems like he’s thinking that I’m thinking something bad again.

After checking Ironman’s signal and the position of the glove, Ooshima-sensei threw the third pitch.

“BALL!”

Facing the third pitch, I still had no intention of swinging the bat. This time, the ball felt like it was outside the strikezone. It seems like they’re becoming more wary of me now.

“What’s wrong, Yoshii? Not going to hit?”

“Yeah. Well, how should I put it…I have a lot of ideas in my mind.”

I deliberately made such a taunting tone to make Ironman more wary of me.

I don’t know what Ironman’s feeling now, but I can feel that Ironman just moved the glove slightly behind me.

“BALL!”

Another ball. Now it’s 3 balls and one strike. Right now, the opponent can only fight it out with me.

“…”

Ironman adjusted the glove for the fifth pitch, and I silently grip the bat for Ooshima-sensei’s pitch.

The ball went nicely down the middle to the strikezone. Unlike the four powerful pitches before, this pitch focuses on control instead. I don't think it's a curveball, so it's time to swing the bat. Facing this ball, I have confidence that I can hit this half the time. But…

"STRIKE!"

I still didn't swing the bat. Though I am confident that I can hit the ball half the time, it means that I will miss half the time.

"Is that really alright, Yoshii? Don't you want to be the hero to tie this ball game?"

"No, I do want to be the hero."

Seeing that I let the ball slip by, Ironman looked really intrigued and couldn't help but say that to me. To him, it seems that I don't want to knock a base hit. Well, it's no wonder he would think that way when I didn't hit that ball just now.

As I hold the bat to a short position, the sixth pitch immediately came to me. Like the pitch just now, this pitch focused on control as it landed into a nice center position. At this moment, I can't let any ball pass by me.

KLANG! I swing the bat to let out a nice crisp and light sound, and the ball rolled out of first base.

"FOUL!"

Right now, it's 2 strikes and 3 balls.

"…Are you waiting for a base on balls? That's a passive way of thinking."

"Ah, no. I don't mean that—"

"Humph. Stop lying. From the way you swung the bat, even an idiot can tell what you're thinking."

Having seen me swing the bat, Ironman muttered. He’s right, I am aiming for a base on balls. I intend to hit all the pitches into foul territory until the final ball comes.

“It’s rare to have such a chance, and yet you want to waste it.”

“Well…actually, I was thinking the same way…”

KLANG!

“FOUL!”

The seventh pitch was a foul ball as well. Ooshima-sensei should be irritated by now?

“But since it’s a rare chance, I want to repay what I borrowed.”

“Repay? What do you mean?”

KLANG!

“FOUL!”

“Uu…how should I say it? I’m really troubled. I bet everything on such an important match, yet I didn’t accomplish anything before this thing ends.”

“Hm? What are you saying?”

“I can only wish that others can finish off this wish that I would never give up on. Should I be depressed, or angry, or is it an inexplicable feeling…”

“I have no idea what you’re trying to say here.”

KLANG!

"FOUL!"

I hit the ball aside, and it grazed past the grass.

I grip my bat again, and watch the opponent pitch the ball.

"I don't know how to express it, but anyway—"

"Anyway? What are you trying to say?"

The ball zipped past the outside corner.

I didn't swing the bat this time, but casually answered Ironman's question.

"—I'M JUST UNHAPPY THAT I'M NOT THE MAIN CHARACTER TODAY!"

"BALL! BASE ON BALLS!"

Ooshima-sensei's concentration was finally worn out by me and finally lost control. Now I can get onto first base.

"Speaking of which, sensei. Is that really alright?"

"What?"

"If you really want to fight it out with us, you would send me and Yuuji onto base, and focus on Himeji-san, right?"

Ironman faced off against me. If that's the case, he would be going up against Yuuji too. If the teachers wants to win this game without worry, they would focus on Himeji-san who's after that.

On hearing me say this, Ironman remained silent, and suddenly burst out laughing.

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, YOSHII!? LISTEN UP—"

Ironman pointed at me and said it clearly to me.

“We teachers have to be role models for you students. If we can’t face you all head on, what can we teach you!”

Now that he mentioned it, I can’t say anything for a while. This teacher’s always giving us corporal punishment, so why didn’t anyone sue him to the educational committee. At this moment, I seem to understand the reason.

Our conversation came to an end. I turn around to look at the batter, Yuuji. Yuuji’s staring back at me.

“I paid you back for the test of courage, Yuuji.”

“…Stop joking around. Don’t think you owe me just that.”

I passed my bat to Yuuji, who gripped it tight. Alright, now I’m a runner at first base, and now I can only leave everything to Yuuji.

“I’ll leave the rest to you then.”

“Got it. I’ll hit the ball out.”

I nod hard at his forceful reply and turn to walk towards first base.

Our class F just needs to catch up by one point. Right now, it’s two men out and runners on first and second. If Yuuji can hit a long ball, we can win with a base hit, but if only one person returns to first base, we’ll definitely lose in extra innings. This is an easy to understand situation.

Right now, my body’s stiff straight due to the tension, and I can only stand at first base and watch the duel between the pitcher and batter. Once the ball gets hit, I have to run with all I got. If I can get to home plate, it’ll be our F class win.

After Ooshima-sensei checked the runners at first and second, they got ready to pitch.

The first pitch left Ooshima-sensei’s hand.

“ST—STRIKE!!”

The signal of the strike rang throughout the entire arena. The way I see it, this ball was really fast. The fatigue of the full count off was still there, but Ooshima-sensei just pitched it as it were nothing. It was strong as ever, and no wonder Muttsurini was only about to hit a short ball.

Ironman threw the ball back at Ooshima-sensei. Both of them decided on the next pitch, and Ooshima-sensei again got ready to pitch.

“BALL!”

This time, it’s a low ball. Yuuji didn’t swing as he just let that fly by. Right now, it’s 1 ball 1 strike.

Everyone can only swallow their saliva and wait for this crucial third pitch.

Ooshima-sensei rested his right hand on his shirt and wipes off the sweat.

Yuuji focuses his weight on the back foot, seemingly storing energy so that he can launch a hard one here.

Ooshima-sensei tilted his body forward and forcefully swung the ball.

That was a fastball that came right at the batter.

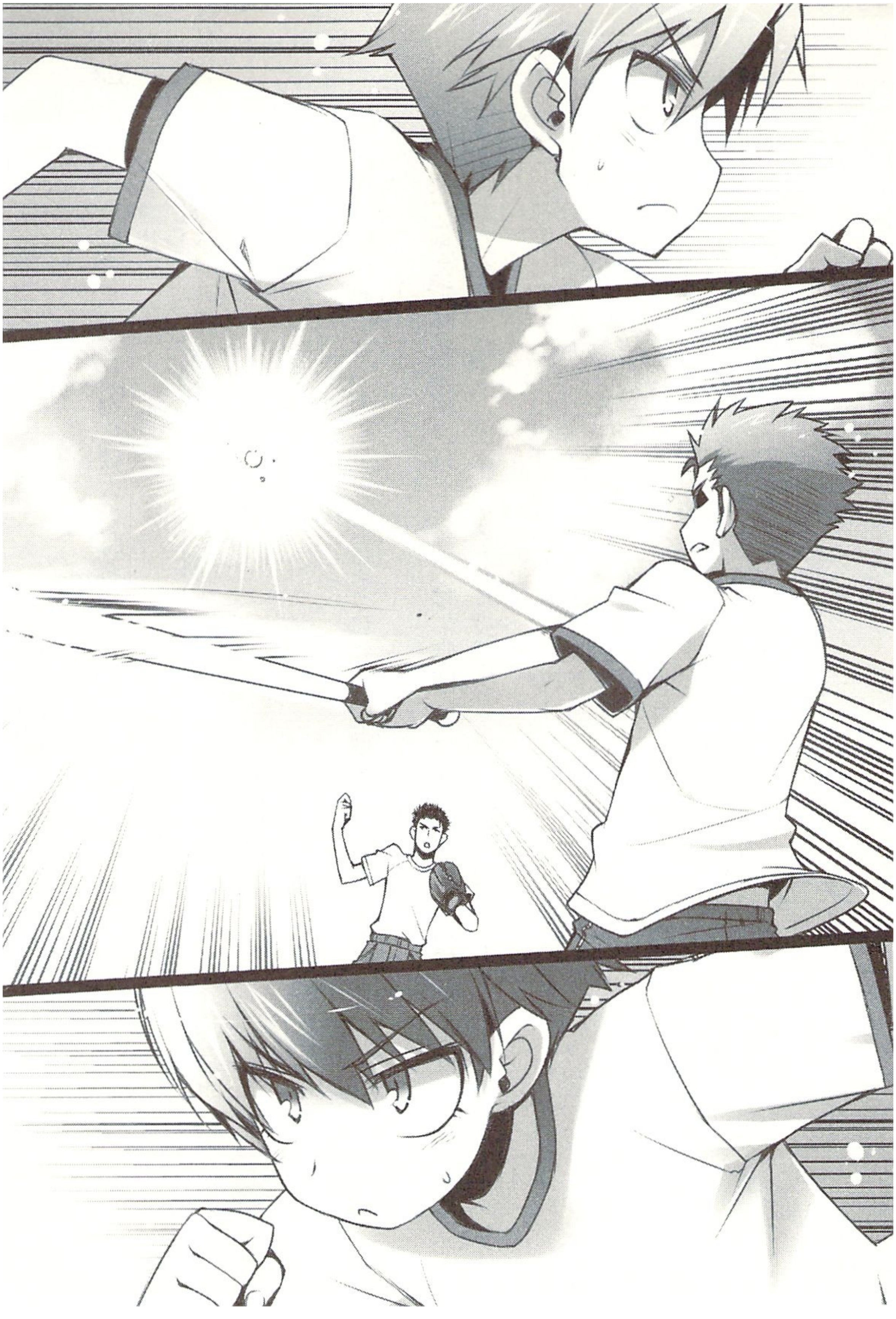
Swinging the back foot that’s acting as the center of gravity, Yuuji spins his body and swings the bat hard.

--KLANG!

The crisp sound echoed throughout the arena.

“‘“—u!!”’”

At that moment, Muttsurini and I used all our strength to sprint to the next base.



The ball landed right in front of the center fielder, and the center fielder who’s rather far out ran front to get that bouncing ball.

Muttsurini, who was on second base, quickly stepped onto third base and ran to home. And I stepped onto second base and ran to third.

I can feel the teacher in charge of center field picking up the ball.

“Ooshima-sensei!”

What entered my ears was the voice of a young teacher. Terai-sensei picked the ball up and quickly passed the ball to Ooshima-sensei who’s in the middle.

At that moment, Muttsurini stepped onto first base. It’s now 1-1. We’re even!

The third base coach told me to stop.

This instruction is correct. Besides, I won’t make it if I continue to run. But even so—

“““YOSHII!!”””

I stepped onto third base and continued running to home.

Now’s the time. I have to get onto home plate!

I frantically try to run on the arena. I’m almost there. There’s just 5 m left.

At this moment, Ironman caught the ball from Ooshima-sensei. He’s blocking me as I continue to run to first base, spreading himself defensively to block me in a melee brawl. As we collide, if the ball dropped out from Ironman’s glove, I’ll win. However, Ironman will win if I get blocked completely.

“—Uu!”

I grit my teeth and lowered my body as I get ready to crash in. Like me, Ironman immediately lowered his center of gravity to block me.

At this moment,

"—U!"

I tilt my body aside and spin around Ironman.

"Uu? Ku—!"

Trying to block my impact and lowering his center of gravity, Ironman couldn't catch up to my unexpected action. As his body slowed down by half a step, I fall forward and reach my hand out to home plate.

The dust scattered, and everyone present couldn't help but hold their breaths.

And then, the umpire loudly declared the outcome of this game.

"—SAFE!!!"

"""YYYYYYYYYEEEESSSSSS!!!"""

Everyone in F class jumped up from the bench and let out delighted cries.

"…Nice going, Yoshii."

Pa Pa. Ironman patted the dust of his shirt and said that to me.

"Because I thought that it could work?"

"It could work? Even if I were the opponent?"

"No, since I'm going up against Nishimura-sensei, I felt that it could work. Didn't sensei tell me that?"

I impishly imitated Ironman's tone,

"'We teachers have to be role models for you students. If we can't face you all head on, what can we teach you!'"

As I understood Ironman's personality, I felt that it could work. Because he's one that will honestly block me head on, so I felt that this bypass plan could work.

On hearing me explain that, Ironman couldn’t help but widen his eyes, and then responds happily,

“I see. If that’s the case, I have to change my attitude towards you next time.”

“THE TEACHERS-VS-STUDENTS MATCH BETWEEN CLASS 2-F AND THE TEACHERS ENDED! FINAL SCORE’S 2-1. CLASS 2-F WIN!”

““““THANK YOU FOR THE MATCH!!””””

Finally, the baseball tournament that belonged to us ended.

The Final Question

TETSUJIN

Remember these baseball rules!

“Takahashi-sensei, I brought the research materials you wanted.”

“Thank you, Himeji-san.”

“No need for that. Anyway, I’ll put the research materials here.”

“The Dai-Nippon High School will catch up with just one point. The batter this time is Yamane, and his batting average up till now is—”

“Eh? Is that the broadcast of High School baseball?”

“Yup. I don’t really understand baseball well, so I thought of using the audio broadcast to increase my knowledge of baseball.”

“Increase knowledge of baseball? Takahashi-sensei, you’re really serious.”

“I have to learn more about things I don’t know.”

“I guess so. I have to work harder…”

“Let’s work hard together then.”

“Ah, speaking of what I don’t know, there’s something I don’t know if it’s related to baseball…”

“What is it?”

“Sensei, do you know what the meaning of ‘squeeze’ is? Before I came here, Akihisa-kun and Sakamoto-kun were discussing about this, so I’m somewhat puzzled. Even though I could check it…”

“No, it’s better to check things through before you forget. It’s important to have this attitude when learning.”

“Thank you for reminding me.”

“Well, as for squeeze…”

(Squeeze: The runner at third base works together with the batter. The batter will bunt to let the runner run back home to allow him to score.)

“I’m not really sure…but from the sound of it—it should be similar to a ‘school swimsuit’.”

“Ah, I see. So that’s how it is. Thank you sensei.”

“Dai-Nippon High decided to hit a squeeze at this moment, and that hit was beautiful.”

“That’s right, number 7, Yamane Kensaburo-kun just hit a beautiful bunt to score.”

““…””

“Sensei, do people have to wear swimsuits when play high school baseball?”

“Maybe that’s a custom when play in some hotter areas.”

“—Will the class representative of the overall winner, class 3-D please stand up?”

“Yes.”

As the summoning tournament ended, the sports meet was ended with a class relay race. After that, it was the closing ceremony. We lined up at the sports hall in line and watch the winners go up the stage one by one.

On a side note, our class managed to get 4th in level, and 13th overall. We were performing really well up till then, but we didn’t get any points for the borrowing race. We can only perform well in this beside exams, so to us class F, this isn’t something we’re happy about.

“Students-vs-teachers summoned beast baseball exchange game. The winning team is, class 2-F.”

(Now we can get back out precious!)

(The principal promised it herself! We’ll get them back!)

Though our overall ranking was bad, everyone whispered happily. The Ero-bo—no, the let me repeat that, the important reference books will be returned to us! How can we not be happy?

“—And that’ll be the end of Fumitzuki Gakuen’s sports meet.”

The winners of each event said a few words, and the principal ended her speech. Now, we managed to finish this sports meet. While the other classes are preparing to go home, our class immediately gathered around Ironman.

“Alright, now we can get our treasures back!”

“MY DVD! MY PHOTO ALBUMS! MY PHOTO!”

“MY BIBLE (ERO-BOOK)! MY TREASURES (ERO-BOOK)! MY REFERENCE BOOKS (ERO-BOOK)!”

Ironman could only sigh as we continued to create a ruckus.

“…Well, a deal’s a deal. I’ll return those confiscated items to you.”

““““YAY~ BANZAI~!!!””””

“Alright, write down your confiscated items and your name here. I’ll sort them out in one or two days and return them back to you.”

““““YES~ !!!””””

Our class would only answer obediently at this moment. Ironman passed a white piece of paper to us for us to write down our names and the confiscated items. I guess Yuuji will write a certain wedding item that doesn’t match his gruff appearance at all and return it to Kirishima-san.

“Ero book ero book ero book …!”

“Photo album photo album photo album …!”

“Pillow pillow pillow…!”

The muttering of desires can be heard.

I don’t really mind, but after seeing this group of classmate writing things like ‘let the erotic onee-san *beep* you and then *beep**beep**beep* you ☆‘, I had to wonder, how does the world view us?

As we basked in the happy atmosphere, we started writing our names and our confiscated items on the paper. Ironman looked wry as he kept the whole pile of papers in a plastic bag and tucks it underneath his armpit.

“Alright. Those with the confiscated items on the paper, I’ll send them over in the next few days through ‘mail’.”

Ironman’s words made us unable to react for a while.

Eh…? Ma…il…

“The recipient will be your parents or guardians. Everyone, wait till that package arrives.”

Mail? Guardian? Is, isn’t that…

““““HAAAAAAA!!!?””””

Would that mean that he’ll send my Ero-Books to my sister? WHA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? THIS DEVIL! DEMON! IRONMAN!!

“You guys did well, and the overseas guests were satisfied. Even the principal was happy that she agreed to return them back to you.”

THAT’S NOT GOOD AT ALL! IF SHE WERE IN A GOOD MOOD, SHE WOULD SEND IT OVER TO US, RIGHT!?

“Also, the principal had a few words for you. ‘The school will return the confiscated items to you, but whether those things are suitable for you, I’ll let the guardians deal with that’.”

““““THAT, THAT DAMNED OLD GRANNY—!!””””

DAMN IT, IF THAT’S THE CASE, SHE MIGHT AS WELL NOT RETURN THEM TO US! IF THOSE THINGS ARE GOING TO BE DISCOVERED, I’LL GET A TANTRUM THROWN AT ME, AND MY THINGS WILL BE THROWN AWAY MERCILESSLY! THAT’S DOUBLE PUNISHMENT!!”

“Hau…that’s really bad… In this case, mommy will see my hug pillow…”

“Me too. What should I do…if I tell that it wasn’t a pillow but a little sandbag, maybe I can make it slip by…”

“San (third)…? I see…Minami-chan, it’s your third time too…. Actually, if I get discovered now it’ll be my the third time as well…”

“Hold on, Mizuki. Don’t drag me into your world!”

Himeji-san and Minami look really dejected. It seems that their confiscated things are something they don’t want to show to their parents. Some kind of hug pillows, were it?

“Okay, end of Homeroom. Hurry up and go back, and don’t go somewhere else to play.”

““““Ah.””””

Because we could take back this decision, Ironman already turned to walk to the school building.

Uu…it’s over…since that happened…

“EVERYONE! AT THIS POINT, WE CAN ONLY RAID THE STAFF

ROOM!!”

“WELL SAID, YOSHII! I WAS THINKING ABOUT THAT!”

“ME TOO! SEEMS LIKE WE THINK ALIKE!”

For our glorious tomorrow, we started planning our action.

☆

“—That’s how it is. Sakamoto-kun seemed to be mistaken.”

“…Mn, thank you for telling me that, Mizuki.”

“No need to thank me. I didn’t do anything.”

“…No, you really helped me out. Because Yuuji, he wouldn’t listen to my explanation no matter what.”

“That’s true. Sakamoto-kun really won’t understand or find any excuses.”

“…Yuuji’s really useless at that.”

“But he really thinks fast at other things. That’s so weird.”

“…Mn.”

“…But Shouko-chan. Sakamoto-kun would apologize to you even if he won’t explain to you. At that moment—”

“…Mn. I’ll thank Yuu—”

“No, I’m not talking about that. Shouko-chan, you must pretend that nothing happened.”

“…Hm? Why?”

“Listen. Shouko-chan, you must pretend that nothing happened at that time—”

“…Mn.”

“Then, as proof of your apology, kiss him!”

“Eh!”

“? Shouko-chan, what’s wrong?”

“…I’m alright.”

“…I’m alright.”

“I see.”

“…Well, you feel like a strategist…”

“That’s not true. It’s normal to think this way.”

“…Then, Mizuki will find a chance to do that to Yoshii?”

“…”

“…Mizuki?”

“No, we, well…I just naturally proposed that idea from a third person’s view, but my mind will go blank once it happens on me, and I can’t say anything…”

“…That’s really like Mizuki.”

“I, I don’t really mind. It’s really a rare chance right now. Shouko-chan, you must do your best!”

“…Mn. I’ll do my best.”

“Shouko-chan…are you nervous?”

“…A little.”

Author’s Notes

I really want to thank you for picking up this book. I’m the author of this novel, Inoue Kenji.

Unexpectedly, we’ve reached the ninth volume, and we managed to pile it up a bit. It’s thanks to everyone’s that this baka story could continue. Although I say that all the time, I really like thank the readers for their continuous support.

Unlike the last volume, this afterword is about 8 pages long, so I want to introduce some letters, mailcards and faxes the readers sent me. Actually, I really wanted to reply them all properly…

Alright, then, let me introduce the content of such letters.

“I love Muttsurini! Please make him Kudou-san’s boyfriend!”

“When will Aiko-chan and Muttsurini become girlfriend and boyfriend?”

“I’m a fan of Muttsurini! Since Aiko-chan said that she doesn’t love Muttsurini, create a character similar like mine to go out with him!”

There are many similar letters, and some readers even sent in some cute illustrations. I’m really happy, but I still can’t let such new characters debut, so I’m really sorry…

The readers who like Muttsurini seem to be divided into different groups. One wants ‘him to be with Aiko’, while the other group ‘doesn’t want Muttsurini to be with anyone’. I understand. If that’s the case, I’ll take the middle ground and ‘propose that Muttsurini’s a girl’. How does everyone feel about this? If that’s the case, it won’t be a question of whether he should be with anyone. It’s a good idea that can solve all this—nonono, you’re mistaken! I’m not envious that

Muttsurini attracted a bunch of girls. This is just to set up a common consensus between the readers. It’s something I had to do! If you are still feeling doubtful, you can ask the leader of the FFF, Sugawa-kaichou. I think he will agree with me.

Alright, enough with the jokes. Now, there’s a lot of ‘will A be together with B’ questions. Well, I’m not really certain now. What kind of development will they have…? One letter even had this ‘I’ll give the Toko-Natsu pair to Inoue-sensei, so just let Hideyoshi be my wife’. I’ve been a member of society for 6 years, and this is the first time I heard of such an unreasonable deal.

Alright, next, it’ll be the next question. This would be a question everyone would ask me regardless of gender.

“What is ‘Souuke’?”[8]

Inoue Kenji just met the biggest crisis of his life.

This is really…too unprecedented…! When I wrote ‘please promise me never to ask the meaning of these words to your parents’, I didn’t think that it would cause me to be in such a predicament…

But that’s right. Since you don’t know, and you were forbidden from asking, you can only ask the person who wrote this…

Mn, if I have to explain it…well, how should I pit it? If I have to put it, don’t they have a litmus paper test in science? A fluid’s nature is different, causing it to change colors. Using that example, it’ll be that the other pieces of paper will change color according to the fluid, but it would always change into the same color—eh? What’s that? Is it God’s punishment on me? Kami-sama…from tomorrow onwards, I’ll live a proper life. Please forgive me…

This question is like asking ‘where do babies come from’. Besides, you’ll know when it’s time, so everyone, please forget about this like good kids. Okay?

Alright, on to the next kind of letters. These are letters from readers who are aspiring to be novelists asking me questions.

“How do you think of such brilliant answers in the tests?”

“How do you come up with a story like Baka Test?”

“When would you think of such funny answers in the tests?”

There are many more like this, and also ‘the way I plan out the story’. I guess this should differ according to person, but to me, I included a lot of personal experience.

Like for example, something happened while I was dealing with a shipment from overseas.

As the meeting went halfway through, my superior started indicating all sorts of problems with regards to the foreign designs. Of course, all the prepared materials were in English, so everyone paid attention to the superior.

At this moment, the briefing included a part of my designing. So my superior turned to me and asked me.

Superior: “Inoue, did someone include the next design plan as response to this?”

My superior was talking about a investigation report on a foreign market that was written completely in English.

I wasn’t ready yet, so I got really anxious when I was called. But if I stood up to answer hurriedly, my superior wouldn’t believe me. To prevent that from happening, I then got up hurriedly from my chair and looked through the information in my hand to answer my superior’s question.

Me: (…I don’t understand what’s on the paper other than ‘this’ no matter how many times I read it…)

Because of that personal experience, I wrote a ‘do you only know how to translate the word ‘this’?’ in the test question. In this world, some things are useful to oneself, so readers, please don’t waste your personal experience and experience more about life.

On a side note, as for the predicament just now, I frantically searched through the report, and managed to roughly explain the data and layout to my superior. Well, I managed to get through. My sempai told me that the most important part about designing is to ‘fulfill my talent as much as I can’. Sempai, I managed to get through this, but I feel that it’s going to hit me hard one of these days. Dear readers, please don’t be like this Inoue-sama, and study your English well.

Of course, there were many more personal experiences based on me, but love, summoned beast system, cross dressing and homosexuality were all my creation. Especially the last two points, I’ll be really pitiful if those last two points happened to me…

Well well, there’s now very few pages left. Actually, I still have lots of letters I want to share with everyone, but I’ll just leave it till next time. To the readers who wrote to me, I really want to thank you.

From now on, I’m going to talk about parts that are relevant to the story. To the readers who haven’t read the book yet, we’ll say goodbye here.

I just mentioned about the ‘way Baka Test was written’. As for the part when the hidden ball was used. Hideyoshi’s declaration that he wanted to take a bath, it was just based on a little moment when me and my friend were paying baseball. Of course, it was like a motivation tactic as we just said things like ‘I really want to bath’ ‘yeah’ that kind of thing. If I remember correctly, on one occasion, we seemed to mix in a ‘hidden ball=I want to bath phrase’, but what will happen if it happens to others? Would we be seriously bathing? Basically, not many people would come up with a hidden ball tactic.

As for the ball distribution and tactics, I’ll be really ashamed if the readers look into it too seriously. Please just close an eye with regards to this. Let’s not talk about the baseball rules, I already got a few mistakes in the baka test questions… so I'm really sorry for this…

Mn, and now for the thanks.

To Haga-sensei, who's in charge of illustrations. My heart just danced when I took a peek at the cover illustration. Mizuki's really too cute! As expected of the first (?) heroine in this story! The last one with Mizuki and Shouko talking together was really nice. I love it! And that picture when they forced Akihisa to go 'ahh-' (laughs). I'm really grateful that you would work hard to create such cute and cool pictures.

K-sama and N-sama, who're in charge of editing, I'm sorry for stubbornly asking for many details in the 'the rice's the culprit part'. I guess there will be a few word and visual puns to express the humor, so please bear with me. As for the deadline to finish the script, I will abide by the timing as much as I can.

And I also like to thank the people involved in the making of the anime. It's thanks to everyone that the world of Baka Test became even wider. I'm really grateful that you could think of so many interesting plots that I couldn't think of. This allowed me to have a chance to learn about a world I don't know about. It's really interesting.

And most importantly, I want to thank the readers. Baka Test has now published 9 volumes, and I'm really happy to be able to walk down this path with all of you. I don't know how this story will continue to develop, but I hope that everyone will continue to accompany me in this story. I'm really sorry for being unable to reply to the letters, postcards and e-mails, but I did read every single one of them thoroughly. These are my main source of energy. Thank you, everyone, for supporting me all this time. I'll continue to work hard from today onwards!

And now, a preview to the next volume.

I think the next volume will be a short story. The content would be 'strip poker with men's pride on the line' and the 'same old yami hotpot those guys send over' and more. However, these are just estimations. Maybe there will be more changes…if there're really changes, I'll like to say that I'm sorry here. I think the next volume will reach the readers’ hands pretty soon, at least that’s what I hope, so please continue to follow this story.

I look forward to seeing all of you on the next stage of Baka Test

自分の学校では部活対抗仮装リレーなんてものがありましたが、今もやってるのかな？今の時代だと，メイド服だのネコ耳だのやってるかもしれない…などと考えながら姫路さんにやってもらいました。

葉賀ユイ
2009.12.

Notes

1. ↑ Baseball rules Too many things to say here, so here's a collection of them on wikipedia. This volume explains a few basic stuff, but not all, so it would be a good idea to read up on baseball before continuing.
2. ↑ This is taken from the pivotal battle of Gaixia. As much as I like to talk about this really enthusiatically, there's really too many things to talk about here. Basically, this happened in Ancient China after the fall of the Qin dynasty. As the warlords started clamoring for power, the forces started to overwhelm each other, leading to two warlords fighting against each other. Liu Bang, leader of the Han people (who would later win to become the first leader of the Han empire in China, one of the most successful regimes in Chinese History), and Xiang Yu, leader of the Chu people. The link provided would be an in-depth description about what happened in the battle, and the idiom was taken from a pivotal scene in this episode.
3. ↑ Mathematical Induction is basically based on the idea of proving that the equation can hold, so you're acting as a lawyer here...okay, enough wry comments. When doing mathematical induction, do remember to state that k is a natural number when n=k, since you will be penalized for not doing that (personal experience). Also, natural numbers are positive integers, e.g. 1,2,3,4,5 that can be counted, though there's still debate on whether 0 can be used.

   > On a side note, the equation 1 is derived through a method called Arithmetic Progression.

4. ↑ Again, baseball fouls, this time on the pitching side.
5. ↑ Explanation :
   1. $2Na + 2H_2O \Rightarrow 2NaOH + H_2$
   2. Iodine in this case must be in aqueous potassium Iodide, since Iodine can barely dissolve in water.
   3. Catalyst is Potassium Permanganate, $KMnO_4$. It is a very powerful oxidizing agent.
   4. Neon is a good refrigerant.

6. ↑ Na I Mn(Mu) Ne --> --> --> No breasts
7. ↑ Text given was extracted from the story 'The Gift of the Magi' by O Henry.
8. ↑ (Sou-uke)- After hours of research (through SFW areas, since I don't want to cross the line), I only got the joke from Lucky Star. Uke would mean the receiving side in something sexual (I'm really not certain of this), or something like that. Sou would mean complete, so that's a complete receiver. Now, can I play NFL fantasy football now?